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# *The* **PALIMPSEST**

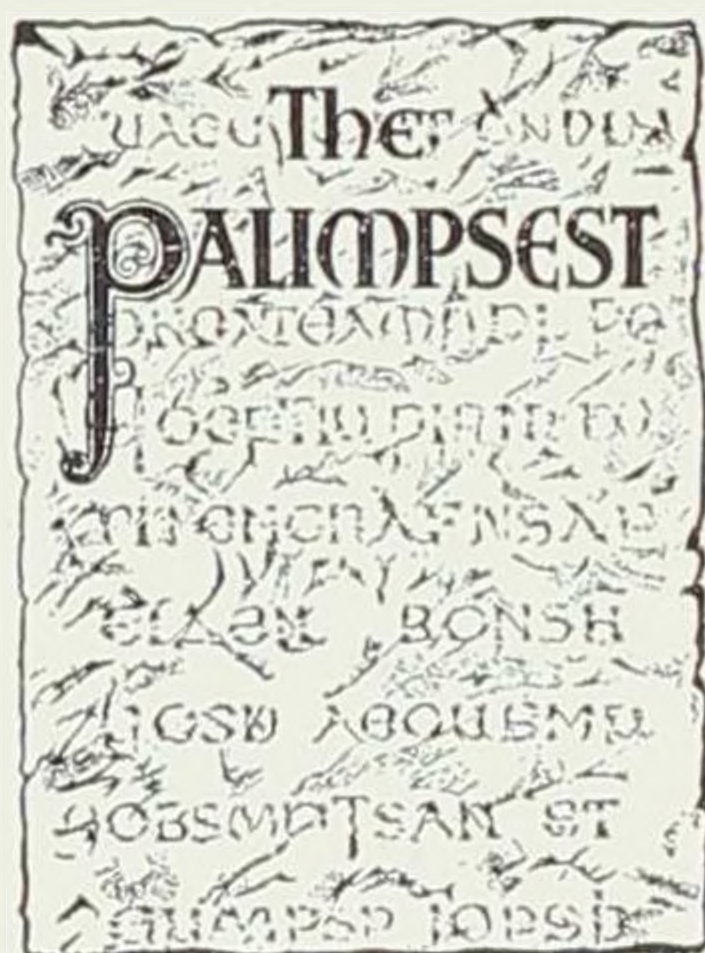


NEW MELLERAY ABBEY NEAR DUBUQUE

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AUGUST 1953





## *The Meaning of Palimpsest*

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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## *Cover*

*Front* — New Melleray Abbey, near Dubuque.

*Back — Inside:* Map of the Catholic dioceses of Iowa.

*Back — Outside:*

*Top:* St. Ambrose Cathedral, Des Moines.

*Bottom:* Ordination of six young priests in Christ the King Chapel at Dubuque.

## *Author*

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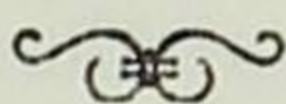
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## Iowa's Early Catholic History

The first white men who gazed upon the wooded hills of eastern Iowa — or any part of Iowa, for that matter — were Catholic Frenchmen. It is possible that in 1655 the explorers, Radisson and Groseilliers, first beheld Iowaland from the mouth of the Wisconsin River near what is now Prairie du Chien. Of certain historical record is the fact that Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet passed down the eastern shore of Iowa in 1673. From that time on various missionaries, along with explorers and traders, passed up and down the Father of Waters, but none tarried in Iowa. In the late 1700's French and Spanish soldiers and traders paddled past the western shores of Iowa on the Missouri River. French military leaders like Des Noyelles and Marin made incursions into Iowa in pursuit of warring bands of Indians, but there are no records of any chaplains accompanying them.

The earliest settlers of Iowa were Frenchmen, and one of them, Jean Marie Cardinal, estab-



lished himself in the 1770's at the mines where the city of Dubuque now stands. Here occurs the first connection of Iowa with the Church: in 1776 Cardinal took his Indian wife and eight children, at least some of whom were probably born in Iowa, to St. Louis where they were all baptized in the little church of that village. Four years later, in the course of the Revolutionary War, Cardinal was killed during the British and Indian attack on St. Louis. Cardinal might well be called the only Iowan to give his life in the cause of American independence.

Following his father's death in 1783, Julien Dubuque, a daring young French Canadian, came west from the district of Three Rivers in Canada to Prairie du Chien. He soon took over the old Cardinal mines at Catfish Creek and became the first permanent settler of Iowa. He confirmed his right "to work at the mine" first by a treaty in 1788 with the Fox Indians, and later, in 1796, through a Spanish grant from the governor of Louisiana. Although Julien Dubuque's mining, trading, and farming operations were conducted on a huge scale, there is nothing to indicate that his settlement was ever visited by priest or missionary. At his death in 1810 the white residents of the "Mines of Spain" erected a large cross over his grave at the top of a bluff overlooking the Mississippi at Catfish Creek, the first public Christian symbol to be set up in Iowa.



The first appearance of a priest, or of any Christian minister in Iowa bent on missionary and evangelizing work, occurred many years later. That fact is more readily understandable when it is recalled that as late as 1830 there were probably not fifty white men in all Iowa. Just two weeks after the Black Hawk Treaty was signed in 1832, and many months before Iowa was thrown open to the settlers, Father Charles Felix Van Quickenborne, a Flemish Jesuit, coming up from his missionary labors along the Mississippi in Missouri and Illinois, arrived in the Half-breed Tract. This spot, where he tarried a few days, was usually called up to that time "The Foot of the Rapids," but Father Van Quickenborne marked it in his records as "Keokuck."

It was here among the French and Americans and half-breed Indians that this first Christian missionary suddenly appeared during the early days of October, 1832. And on October 6, 1832, the first Christian baptism was performed when Father Van Quickenborne christened Maria Louise, the year-old daughter of Joseph Fraiser, a Catholic, and Margaret, "a Folle Avoine Indian" (a Menominee). Two days later two little Negro slave children, Mary Jane, three years old, and Andrew Jackson, six months old, both belonging to Isaac R. Campbell, famous early river-man of Keokuk, were baptized. After giving the marital benediction to six couples at this locality, all of



whom bore French or Scotch names, Father Van Quickenborne returned shortly thereafter to St. Louis.

The following summer this redoubtable priest — the founder of St. Louis University and the teacher and inspirer of another great missionary of the West, Father Pierre Jean De Smet — appeared in Iowa again, coming over from Galena, Illinois, to the village of "Dubuque's" as he spelled it. The first baptism in Dubuque occurred on July 10, 1833, and was conferred upon Henry, the eight-month-old child of Patrick and Mary Sullivan Monaghan. At "Catfish near Dubuque Mines" (the location of the Fox Indian village and Julien Dubuque's establishment) two days later, the missionary baptized five children, two of them half-breeds, and the other three, grandchildren of Dennis Julien, a widely known French Canadian trader of the Northwest who had supported the British in the War of 1812. While in Dubuque Father Van Quickenborne gave the nuptial blessing to four couples and said his daily Mass in the home of a Mrs. Brophy.

Before leaving the village, however, the indefatigable missionary made arrangements for the construction of what should have been the first church of any denomination in Iowa. A meeting was called and the following remarkable document, later found at St. Louis, gives a detailed account of the transaction:



July 19, 1833

Memorandum left with James Fanning at Dubuque:

At an aggregate meeting of the Roman Catholics living at the Dubuque Mines on the 14th of July, 1833, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. That, as it is the general wish that a Catholic Church should be built in this vicinity, the permit shall be obtained in the name of the Right Rev. Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis.

2. That as a majority of four have declared the town of Dubuque or its vicinity to be the most suitable neighborhood for the contemplated church, the designation of the precise spot shall be left to the decision of the committee to be appointed, or a majority of these.

3. That the following gentlemen do form the said committee: viz., James Fanning, James McCabe, Patrick O'Mara, N. Gregoire, and Thomas Fitzpatrick. Mr. James Fanning was unanimously chosen treasurer, into whose hands the subscriptions and donations shall be paid; of which moneys received and expended an account shall be given by the same treasurer to the clergyman appointed by the Bishop to the congregation.

4. That the said committee shall have power to nominate a president out of their number, and he or two of its members to have power to call for a meeting of the committee, and a majority of them to be a quorum to transact all the business relative to the building of the church.

5. The building to be raised by the subscriptions of the Catholics at this place and to be as follows: A hewed log building, 25 feet by 20 feet and 10 feet or 12 feet high, with a shingle roof and plank floor, with four windows, each having 28 lights of 8 by 10 and shutters, the door to be 8 feet by 5 feet.

Here is a momentous document, revealing the



formation of the first Christian congregation in Iowaland. Although this was also the first church parish of any denomination to be established in Iowa, the church edifice, planned by the above committee, was not completed until 1835. During the intervening year of 1834 a log house of worship was built by the Methodists in Dubuque by means of subscriptions from Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The original subscription paper is owned by the State Historical Society of Iowa and it states, "when not occupied by said Church, shall be open for Divine service by other Christian Denominations; and may be used for a common school." Among the various Catholics who contributed to the erection of this chapel were two who are mentioned in the above document of Father Van Quickenborne's — James Fanning and Patrick O'Mara. The listed name of another contributor, "John Regan," was that of the father of the first Iowa child to become a priest of the Roman Catholic Church and who was ordained in Rome in 1863.

Toward the erection of their own church building, "the Catholic inhabitants of Dubuque Mines" subscribed in 1834 some \$1,100 to Father Charles Francis Fitzmaurice, who in that year alternated on Sundays between Galena and Dubuque, and then fell a victim to the dread cholera.

Meanwhile there were also missionary activities in southeastern Iowa, which were laying slowly



and patiently the slender foundations of what was soon to become the diocese of Bishop Mathias Loras. Father Peter Paul Lefevre, in later life to become the bishop of Detroit, followed in the footsteps of his illustrious Belgian countryman, Father Van Quickenborne, in this part of the state. In a letter to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis, dated July 3, 1834, he tells of his visit to Iowa:

Then I returned to this side of the Mississippi among the Half Indians and in the New [Black Hawk] Purchase where the Catholics are increasing very fast. The difficulties and hardships I had to struggle with were great; but in all this I had the consolation of baptizing several adult persons, and of seeing many Catholics, who until then had been cold and indifferent and had never made any use of the Church for many years, take a new start as it were, in the way of their salvation and devoutly approach the sacraments.

Three years later, in March of 1837, he again wrote about Iowa: "In the Wisconsin territory [of which Iowa was then a part] I attended the stations at Keokuk, in Half Indian tract, between the river Des Moines and the Mississippi, and the station on Skunk River, ten miles west from Fort Madison."

Another and most successful missionary in this part of Iowa was the Rev. Augustus Brickwedde, for years pastor at Quincy, Illinois. The son of a judge of the Royal Court of Hanover, and a graduate of the universities of Munich and Bonn, he



devoted much of his time to ministering to German Americans and German immigrants. In the early days of May, 1838, he said holy Mass in the log houses and even in the barns of the early settlers at Fort Madison and on the banks of Sugar Creek in Marion Township. Under his direction the Catholics of this community built a little church of the best sugar-maple trees of their timbered valley, which was then the only building material within reach. It was dedicated to St. James. To the bishop of St. Louis, Father Brickwedde reported for 1838 of Sugar Creek near West Point: "Fifty-eight persons, all Germans, four baptisms, thirty-four Easter Communicants, two marriages, and three interments."

Western Iowa, along the banks of the Missouri, was also visited by missionaries in the very year preceding the advent of the first bishop of Iowa. The federal government had removed a number of Potawatomi Indians to Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. On May 31, 1838, two Jesuit Fathers and two lay brothers commenced their missionary establishment among these Indians. The priests were the eminent Pierre Jean De Smet and his companion, Felix Verreydt. It was, however, Father Van Quickenborne who had originally planned this venture and who had tried, but in vain, to obtain in Washington appropriations for a projected mission school. Wrote Father De Smet of the arrival of the missionaries:



Nearly two thousand savages, in their finest rigs and carefully painted in all sorts of patterns, were awaiting the boat at the landing. I had not seen so imposing a sight nor such fine-looking Indians in America; the Iowas, the Sauks, and Otoes are beggars compared to these. Father Verreydt and Brother Mazella went at once to the home of the half-breed chief, Mr. Caldwell, four miles from the river.

Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, in command of the troops at "the Bluffs," turned over to Father De Smet and his associates the blockhouse fort he had previously erected, and Chief Caldwell gave them three cabins. The blockhouse was turned into a chapel and surmounted with a small belfry. Father De Smet's sense of humor led him to make this note in his journal: "On the day of Corpus Christi I put up a cross on the roof, and while I climbed the ladder to put it in place, Father Felix beheld the devil clap his tail between his legs and take flight over the big hills."

In the spring of 1839 two Catholic gentlemen of great renown, engaged by the United States government to make an exploration of the Far West, were members of the Jesuit congregation at Council Bluffs. One was Jean Nicolas Nicollet, the geologist, and the other Lieutenant John C. Fremont, who became famous in the Mexican War and later was the first Republican party candidate for president of the United States.

The mission so bravely begun soon faced a



hopeless future. Scenes of debauchery followed the arrival of every shipment of liquor by the American Fur Company. The first anniversary of the Jesuits' arrival at Council Bluffs was commented upon thus by Father De Smet: "May 31, drinking all day. Drunkards by the dozen. Indians are selling horses, blankets, guns, their all, to have a lick at the cannon. Four dollars a bottle! Plenty at that price. Detestable traffic."

Despite these terrible handicaps the mission school prospered for a time and drew praise from the Indian agent. In the first three years 308 Indians and half-breeds were baptized, many marriages were blessed, and the sacraments were given to numerous others. But conditions continued to grow so bad that they compelled the definite abandonment of the mission. In August of 1841 Fathers Verreydt and Christian Hoecken, together with the brothers, bade farewell to Council Bluffs.

In the years that followed the Potawatomi Indians in western Iowa were visited only occasionally by Father Hoecken. In 1842 and in 1844 he returned to the mission and administered a number of baptisms. In May of 1846 he was again with the Indians and baptized on this occasion thirty-eight infants and a dying squaw. This was the last visit of a Catholic priest before the closing of the Indian reservation. The blockhouse church was still standing in 1852 when the first priest sent



out by Bishop Loras of Dubuque arrived in Council Bluffs to organize a parish there among the white settlers.

In the meantime, during the 1830's and 1840's, Dubuque had quickly become the focal point of widespread Catholic activities in Iowa. In 1835 there arrived in that little city a Dominican friar, extraordinarily gifted with versatile talents. Had Bishop Rosati of St. Louis done nothing else for the faith in the Northwest than appoint his fellow Italian, the gentle-born Milanese, Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli, to its missions, this region would owe him a debt of eternal gratitude. Mazzuchelli was a saint and a scholar, architect and artist, priest of God and gentleman of the frontier world; he personified physical and spiritual courage; his tongue was a fire of eloquence; his brain was a vehicle of the wisdom of the Lord.

Before the arrival of Bishop Mathias Loras at Dubuque, Mazzuchelli was the only priest in the wilderness for hundreds of miles in all directions, aye, a thousand miles in some. He was at the same time probably serving under three ecclesiastical jurisdictions, that of Vincennes for a part of Illinois; that of Detroit for Wisconsin, and that of St. Louis for Iowa and another part of Illinois. Half-breeds and traders, miners and landseekers composed his far-flung flock. A trip of hundreds of leagues on foot over ice and snow never dismayed him; the tepees of the savage and the huts of the



hard-drinking frontiersmen were his home. Precursor of the faith, pathfinder in the wilderness, under his magnetic influence he saw churches and chapels spring up from Michigan and Wisconsin to Illinois and Iowa. In Iowa he formed or helped to form every early mission along the Mississippi from Dubuque almost to the Missouri state border, and inland as far as little Maquoketa and Iowa City.

In 1835, taking over the lots and the money and materials secured by Father Van Quickenborne and Father Fitzmaurice in the previous two years, Father Mazzuchelli rapidly added to them contributions secured from Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. He decided to build the church much larger than was originally intended — for the growth in the number of Catholics demanded this — and he abandoned the idea of building it of lumber or logs in favor of stone. He himself worked in the nearby quarries to secure the stones, just as he worked later with his hands in the quarries of Prairie du Chien for the Church of St. Gabriel in that town. Wrote Eliphalet Price, one of Iowa's early historians:

The first Catholic church erected in Iowa was commenced at Dubuque in the spring of 1835, under the direction and management of an educated and gentlemanly little French [*sic*] priest by the name of Mazzuchelli. This was a stone edifice. We never transacted business with a more honorable, pleasant, and gentlemanly person



than the Rev. Mr. Mazzuchelli. We left him seated upon a stone near the building, watching the lazy movements of a lone Irishman, who was working out his subscription in aid of the church.

In the following year, while visiting the scattered Catholics at Rock Island and Davenport, Father Mazzuchelli offered up the first Mass in Davenport in the home of Antoine Le Claire, one of the founders of the city of Davenport. Trader, land speculator, and town builder, Le Claire, a half-breed French American, acted also as interpreter-in-chief of the United States government in its treaties with the Sauk and Fox and with other tribes. His mother was the daughter of a Sauk chief. Father Mazzuchelli found "about 40 Catholics" in Davenport. Antoine Le Claire donated four city lots of the value of \$2,500 for a newly projected church for them, and later donated \$1,000 toward its erection. Father Mazzuchelli and Le Claire laid the first stones in April, 1837, and the structure was entirely completed in 1838. It was built of two stories, so that the building could serve as a residence for the priest, and later as a school. It was called St. Anthony, in honor of the patron saint of Antoine Le Claire.

When the ubiquitous Italian missionary arrived in Burlington in December of 1839 he found in that prosperous little city of almost two thousand population only twenty-seven Catholics. Among these were the wife and children of General Au-



gustus Caesar Dodge, at that time the Register of United States Land Office for Iowa, and later one of the first two United States Senators from the state. In the following year, because of a recent influx of Irish and German Catholics, Father Mazzuchelli was encouraged to purchase a piece of land and commence the building of St. Paul's church in Burlington. Remaining there for a short while as pastor, he commenced the mission-parishes of Fort Madison and the Half-breed Tract — Keokuk.

In 1840 he went into the woods of Jackson County to what was then known as "Makokiti," now called Garryowen, where many Irish families had settled since the opening of the Black Hawk Purchase. He directed the building of a large log church which was sufficiently finished by summer to permit the holding of divine services. One hundred persons were present at its dedication at that time to St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland; three years later, in 1843, the parish contained six hundred souls and possessed a crowded school.

In 1840 and 1841 the seat of the Iowa territorial government was transferred from Burlington to Iowa City. A population of almost a thousand — of whom a considerable number were Catholics — had settled in and around the new capital. The legislature had decreed that several lots in the new city were to be set aside for church purposes, on condition that the religious bodies which desired



to obtain them should build upon them churches of not less than a thousand dollars in value. Father Mazzuchelli hastened to Iowa City in December of 1840 with \$2,000 in securities given him by Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque. Posting the securities with the government, he obtained several choice lots. On the 20th of that month he celebrated the first Mass in Iowa City in the house of Ferdinand Haberstroh, a German mechanic, not far from the State House, in the presence of twenty-eight Catholics; after Mass the first dogmatic sermon was preached in Johnson County.

Work on the church structure was immediately begun, and on July 12, 1841, Bishop Loras arrived in Iowa City to lay the cornerstone of "the first church of Iowa's capital, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Father Mazzuchelli addressed the large gathering on the subject of the religious and political advantages resulting from the practice of divine worship. A pile of earth left by the workmen after digging the foundation served as a pulpit for the speaker.

Besides the many churches erected by this remarkable Dominican missionary up and down the Upper Mississippi Valley, other grand monuments emanating from his artistic mind and fashioned by his clever hands were: the Dubuque diocesan college built in 1839 and whose lineal descendant today is Loras College; the Galena, Illinois, courthouse; and the original Sinsinawa col-



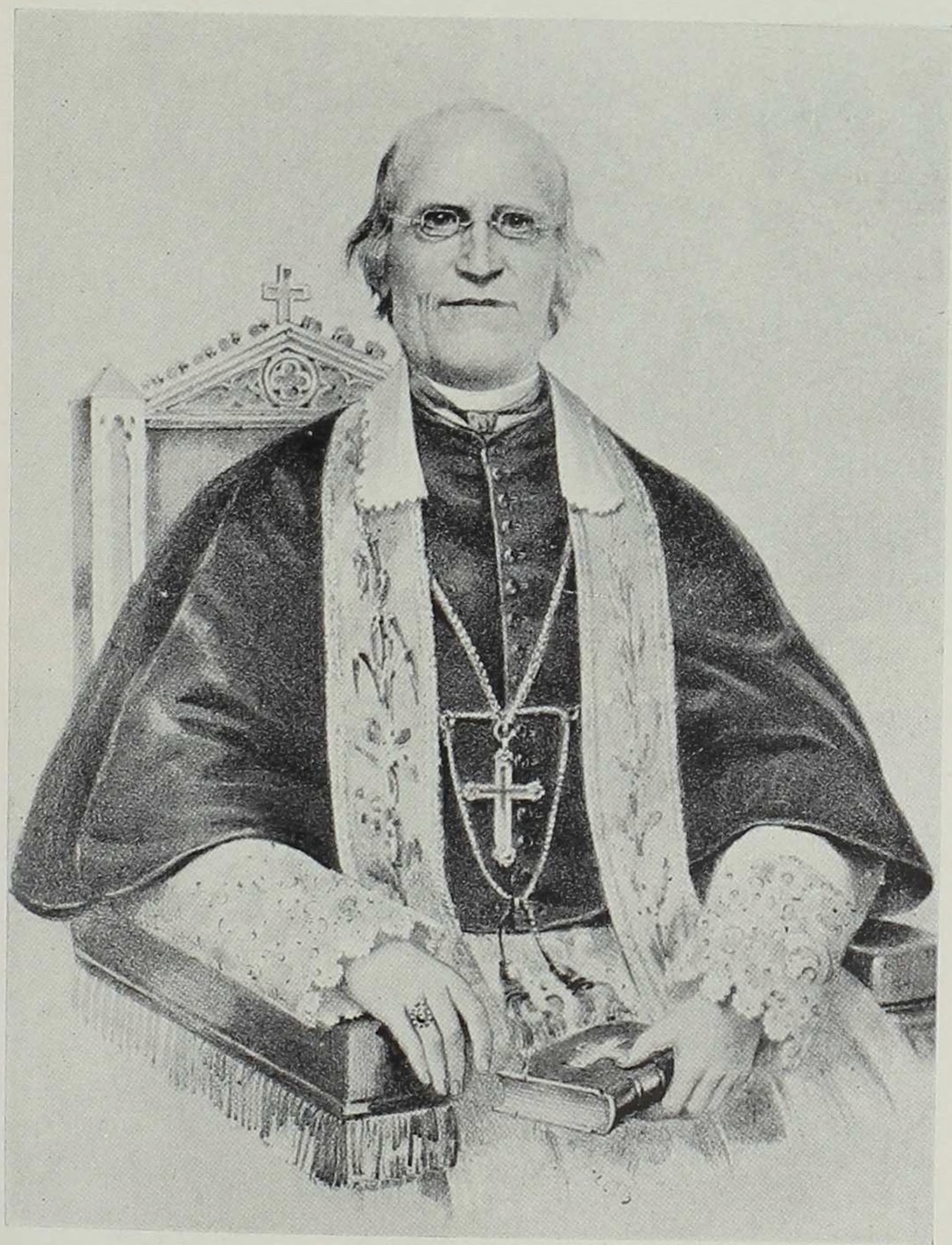
lege building at Sinsinawa, Wisconsin. Both of these latter structures are still standing today.

Of all the traditions that have added color to the history of the Old Stone Capitol at Iowa City, none is more fascinating or persistent than that of the architectural planning of Old Capitol itself by Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli. Certain writers even attribute to him the plan of Iowa City. In his scholarly volume, *The Old Stone Capitol Remembers*, Professor Benjamin F. Shambaugh devotes an entire chapter to the claims of the Mazzuchelli design, and sums up the matter:

The sympathetic and scholarly biographer of Father Mazzuchelli [does not] find any substantial documentary evidence in support of the authenticity of the tradition as factual history. . . . In the years to come, while the Old Stone Capitol will remember the name of John F. Rague as architect has been preserved in the cornerstone, the spirit of Father Mazzuchelli will live to inspire reverence and loyalty in the hearts of men.

In his *Memoirs*, first published in Italy and later in America, Mazzuchelli refers deferentially yet guardedly to the other sects in Iowa with whose members he was constantly thrown into contact. The Italian Dominican had been extraordinarily successful as an Indian missionary in Michigan and Wisconsin. Clever linguist that he was, speaking English, French, and Italian with fluency, he became a master of several difficult Indian tongues. In 1834 he published an almanac in the





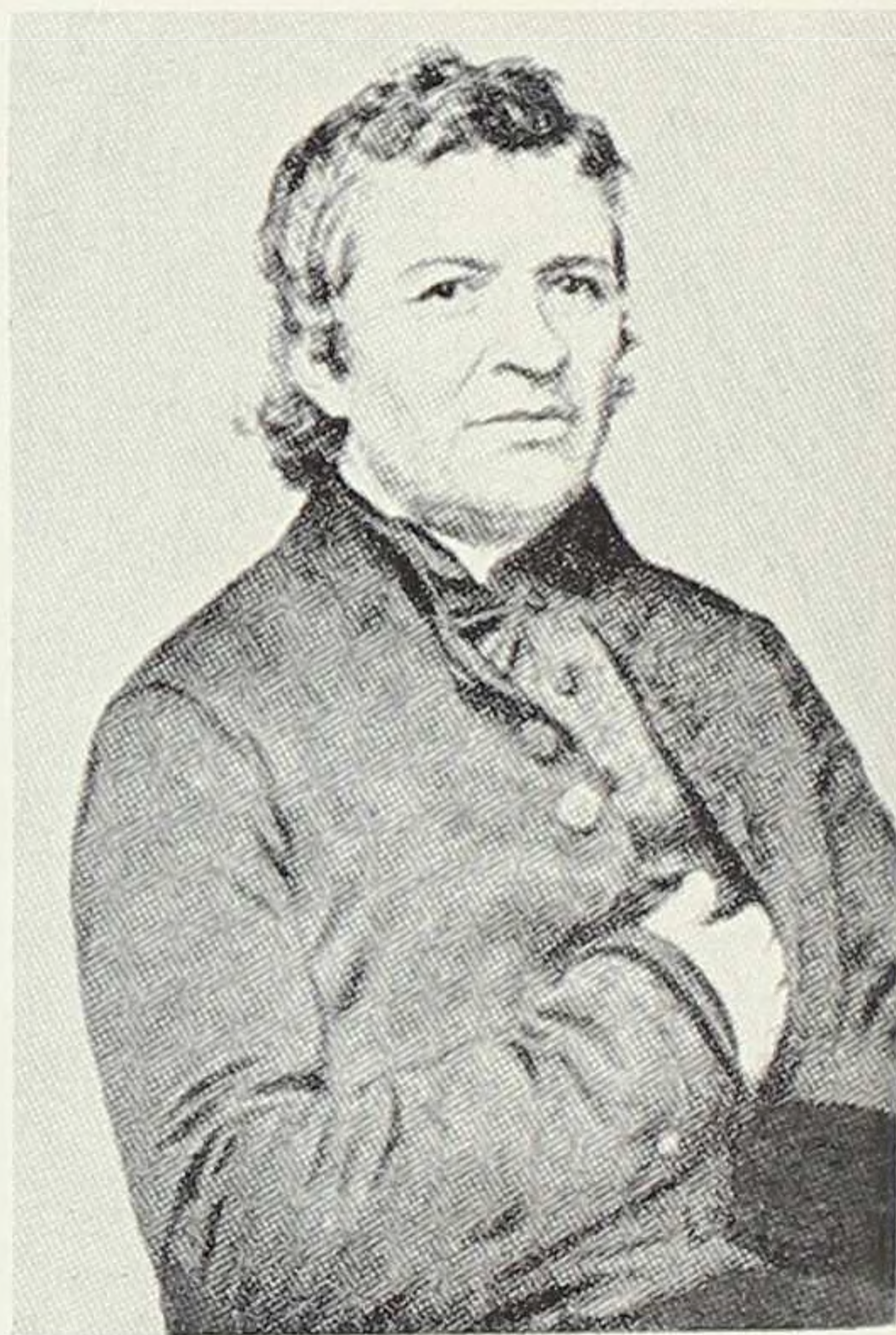
BISHOP MATHIAS LORAS  
(1837-1858)



IOWA'S EARLY MISSIONERS



Father Jacques Marquette



Abbé J. A. M. Pelamourgues



Father Pierre Jean De Smet



Father Samuel C. Mazzuchelli



Menominee speech and this booklet, printed in Green Bay, is thought to be the earliest known printed work in the state of Wisconsin. Previously to that he had published a prayer book and catechism in the Winnebago tongue, which was printed in Detroit. It was among the Winnebago tribesmen that he had made a great many converts, and when the United States government in 1835 opened up a school for the Winnebago children on the Yellow River in Iowa, near present-day McGregor, Mazzuchelli had hoped because of his eminent qualifications to be appointed as superintendent. The Indian agent, Joseph M. Street, however, invited the Rev. David Lowry, a Cumberland Presbyterian divine, to come up from Kentucky and accept the appointment.

This precipitated a bit of a storm. Mazzuchelli's friends, and they were numerous both among his Christian Winnebago communicants and among the whites, pressed strongly for his appointment in view of the fact, as they alleged, that the Rev. Mr. Lowry, unacquainted with the Northwest, was totally ignorant of the Indian ways, habits, and language. But the case for Father Mazzuchelli became hopeless when Colonel Zachary Taylor, commander of Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, a soldier who was later to become President of the United States, stepped into the fray. He attacked the missionary in an offensively worded letter which he sent to General William Clark of St. Louis, the



Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He called the Dominican "a Foreigner, an Italian Catholic Priest," and referred to his "superstitious feelings." He even suggested that Father Mazzuchelli would "no doubt" be a tool of scoundrels for stealing school funds.

It was in Iowa, while watching the immigrants crossing the Mississippi, that Father Mazzuchelli first beheld the (to him) strange religious camp meetings and heard the shouting of the revivalist gathering, and his *Memoirs* contain his philosophical reflections on what he witnessed. He was very interested in the Mormons, and in February of 1843 descended the Mississippi on the ice for ten miles from Fort Madison to Nauvoo. Here he was the personal guest of Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader.

Mazzuchelli took an active part in the territorial beginnings of Iowa. Reared in the polished society of Old World capitals, he was impressed by the vigor and freedom of American political institutions, and he eulogized them at length in his writings. At Dubuque, for the patriotic celebration on July 4, 1836, his new stone church "was used by the people of the town to hear the *oration* delivered by a lawyer." Mazzuchelli himself was chosen chaplain of the occasion. And, in the following October, he was elected chaplain of the first legislature of the newly created Territory of Wisconsin, at its first capital, Belmont. Although



only two of the thirty-nine members were Catholics — Messrs. Patrick Quigley and John Foley, his parishioners of Dubuque (Iowa was a part of the Wisconsin Territory) — the Dominican was chosen to the office without opposition. He gave a formal address to the combined houses before the reading of the governor's message, and, for one week, opened the daily sessions of the legislature with prayer.

In the late fall of 1840, at Burlington, the temporary capital of Iowa Territory, Father Mazuchelli rented his new church to the government for sixty days, until the close of the Third Legislative Assembly. It was used by the Council for its sessions, while the House of Representatives gathered in the Methodist Church. Thus two new church structures — St. Paul's Roman Catholic, and "Old Zion" — served together as the "Capitol" of Iowa Territory.

M. M. HOFFMAN



## The First Bishop of Iowa, 1837-1858

In 1837 the Third Provincial Council of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States met for deliberations at Baltimore. These bishops were all pioneers, and their dioceses were new and pioneer dioceses, too. They looked at the map, and chose three new episcopal centers — Nashville, Natchez, and Dubuque. Thus were Tennessee, Mississippi, and Wisconsin Territory brought beneath the influence of episcopal rule.

There is nothing more fascinating in American history than the frontier's place in our national development. The story of Catholicism's victory over frontier conditions in its march past the Alleghenies, up through the prairies of the Old Northwest, on to the Mississippi, and beyond that to the Rockies and the Pacific coast, is an epic in itself.

Of the three new sees, created at Baltimore, Dubuque was at the time of its creation the one farthest removed from the centers of American civilization, and was by far the largest in area in the young nation. It comprised roughly all the territory between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers: the present states of Iowa, Minnesota, and two-thirds of the Dakotas. Previous to this vast area's incorporation into the diocese of Dubuque,



it had been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, first, of Quebec when Canada was French; then when Louisiana was ceded to Spain in 1763, it was under the spiritual rule of Havana, Cuba; later, after the Louisiana Purchase, it was under Baltimore, then New Orleans, and finally under the bishop of St. Louis. Of course, this spiritual rule over Dubuque was vague and merely academic in those years, since no missionary until 1832 had penetrated to the wilderness that then was Iowa.

On April 18, 1839, a Mississippi river packet brought the first bishop of Iowa to Dubuque from the deep South. An Alabamian by adoption, he was first, beyond all that, a scion of the *ancien régime* of France.

Bishop Mathias Loras had been born at Lyons just as the Revolution in France was rushing to its climax. He was but an infant in his mother's arms when she pleaded with the tyrant Couthon for the life of her husband, a wealthy aristocrat and counsellor of Lyons. But Loras *père* was in the very first group to be guillotined, and a few days later the same fate overtook two of his sisters and two brothers, one of the latter being mayor of St. Cyr. In all, seventeen persons of the Loras family lost their lives for their political and religious convictions.

After his ordination to the priesthood, Mathias Loras became a professor and then president of the large diocesan seminary of Lyons. Abandon-



ing what promised to be a brilliant church career in France, he came to the diocese of Mobile to labor as a missionary in the forests and everglades of Alabama and Florida. (His was not the first Loras name known in America, for his father's cousin had served under the Marquis de Lafayette during the War of Independence.) In Mobile Loras had served as rector of the cathedral and had become the president of the first college of Alabama — Spring Hill College, still flourishing today.

How little Bishop Loras knew of Iowa before his arrival may be gathered from the letter he had previously written to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis from Alabama after receiving the news of his appointment by Rome. Among the questions he asked in this missive are these: "What are the people, Irish, American, French, savages? Is there any other village besides Dubuque? Is the climate because of the latitude cold? Are there some Catholic Indians? Do they speak English? At what distance is Dubuque from the Mississippi? How does one reach there?"

When the new bishop entered the little stone cathedral of St. Raphael's at Dubuque, built by Father Mazzuchelli, he was doubtless unconscious of the impress he was to leave for a century on the Catholic Church of Iowa. It is true that he was of aristocratic lineage; that he was a slaveholder while in Mobile; that his political and cultural



sympathies were strongly with the pre-Civil War South, and that he was a man of wealth. But before he died every cent of that wealth, and of all that he could beg from his family in France, was to be spent in Iowa on churches, schools, and other institutions; all of his broad missionary experiences learned in the Southland were to be used to advantage in this vast new missionary territory; and all of his previous feelings and inclinations were to be submerged in his heroic effort to establish the Catholic Church in the Northwest.

Hardly had he breathed the air of Iowa when, with Father Mazzuchelli, he built and launched his new college, which he named St. Raphael's Seminary, and which, humble as it was in its beginnings, was still the first institution of higher learning to succeed in Iowa. By educating here the sons of Iowa, Bishop Loras hoped ultimately to have a native clergy for his diocese. From his fruitful experience as president of Spring Hill College at Mobile, the new bishop knew that in this frontier college he could not expect an exclusive theological seminary as in France, nor a strictly maintained college as in the older and more settled sections of the country. He expected — and he was not disappointed — to find that his students would be of all ages, of all grades of education — a *melange* of theologians, seminarians, collegians, and high school students.

These scholars were not numerous in the earlier



years. Very few of the advanced pupils were Americans; the greater number of these came from abroad — from France, Germany, Ireland, and Luxembourg — to the Dubuque diocese to complete their college and theological courses before being ordained into the priesthood. The Americans formed the majority of the nonclerical students and of the younger lads.

Indeed, of the students of the preparatory department, practically all were American born. In fact, two of them were aboriginal Americans — two Sioux Indian youths from near Fort Snelling, Minnesota, whom Loras thought he might some day educate for the priesthood and use as missionaries among their savage kinfolk. They were also to teach the Sioux language to seminarians preparing for the Indian missions. Of students of mixed Indian and white blood there were several at various times: Alexander Faribault and several others of the sons of Jean Baptiste and Oliver Faribault — the founders of the Minnesota city that bears their name today — were students at the old St. Raphael's Seminary. So was Napoleon Brisbois, the son of Joseph Brisbois of the old Brisbois family of Prairie du Chien.

The Faribaults, it may be mentioned here, did not remain long. M. Faribault wrote that he was withdrawing his sons as he feared they had too much liberty at the Dubuque college, and he was sending them to the Jesuit college at St. Louis (St.



Louis University today) where they would be under stricter surveillance.

For the new immigrants in his widely scattered missions Bishop Loras at first secured priests from France, and later from Ireland and Germany. He himself made herculean journeys to visit his thinly-spread-out flock. On one occasion he went 275 miles by steamboat to the Falls of St. Anthony and to Fort Snelling where he baptized fifty-six persons and administered confirmation and gave communion to many others. He returned the entire distance on the Mississippi by canoe with a young priest and a solitary Indian guide, stopping at Indian villages and white settlements on the way, and plying the paddle as lustily as his more youthful companions. On another occasion, having gone by way of the river to St. Louis, he took a steamboat from there up the Missouri River and visited Council Bluffs and the western shore of Iowa. He traveled through his huge diocese by horseback, by oxcart, by wagon, and by carriage. With horse and buggy he once visited the stations all the way to Fort Dodge and circuitously back to Dubuque.

Under Loras' inspiring leadership some of his foreign-born priests became prodigious workers in the western vineyard of the Lord. Father Lucien Galtier, a Frenchman, was the founder of the city of St. Paul, the capital of Iowa's northern neighbor. Later he built up the parish of Prairie du



Chien. Today his remains lie there in front of the church of St. Gabriel — built by Mazzuchelli — in the tomb erected to his memory.

Another remarkable man was the German Dominican, Father John George Allemann, educated in Kentucky, who for years attended Burlington and the stations in Lee, Van Buren, and other counties in southeastern Iowa. The giant stature of this missionary impressed the chiefs and half-breeds of the Sauk and Fox tribes, many of whom were still in this part of the territory. His generous services for them, together with his human dealings, impelled the Indians to offer him the northern half of what is now the city of Keokuk. "From Fort Madison he usually travelled on foot," wrote one of his parishioners, "as I saw him for years, under his arm a pair of saddle-bags which contained all his church — all a missionary's conveniences to celebrate Mass. Being of huge stature and splendid health, he could cover in a morning on foot, without great fatigue, as much ground as an average horse."

As Father Allemann frequently crossed over into Illinois to care for the scattered Catholics there, and thus met Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader, on various occasions, a friendship gradually sprang up between the two men. It is evident that Smith greatly admired the tall Dominican. When Catholics from distant points in Illinois came to Nauvoo on their way to Fort Madison to



fetch the Iowa priest to attend sudden sick calls in their families, they usually found no means of crossing. Smith invariably sent his barge, manned with strong men, as the crossing was at the head of the rapids, to bring Father Allemann over. One wonders, then, whether it was with the consent of the departed Mormons, tacit, implied, or expressed, that in 1846, when Father Allemann began to build his church in Fort Madison, he used stones from the old Mormon quarries at Nauvoo and from the now abandoned Mormon temple. In the winters of 1846 and 1847 the priest brought over hundreds of loads of cut stones on the ice.

Loras' most successful Indian missionary in the 1840's was, singularly enough, a rather elderly priest, a "Bachelier" in letters from the University of France and a graduate of famed St. Sulpice at Paris — Joseph Cretin. Cretin's uncle had been guillotined in 1793 on the same platform that received the blood of Loras' father, and a year later his mother had been imprisoned by the revolutionists. His prodigious accomplishments at Prairie du Chien and especially on the Turkey River in Iowa near the Fort Atkinson reservation among the Winnebago tribe had won for him from James MacGregor, Jr., the United States Indian agent — and from other influential men as well — the enthusiastic endorsement of the position of superintendent of the "Winnebago School." In 1845, however, Governor John Chambers of the Iowa



Territory not only refused him this appointment but forbade him to open up a missionary school in the Neutral Ground.

The Abbé Cretin was then appointed by Bishop Loras as president of the Dubuque college, a position he relinquished when he became bishop of St. Paul, Minnesota Territory, in 1851. In the meantime the Winnebago had been moved to Minnesota; and there, to Cretin's ultimate joy, he was assisted under government auspices in opening up several trade and agricultural schools.

Mathias Loras laid the foundations for and established the standard of institutions both educational and eleemosynary which the Catholic Church in Iowa has since developed. In the 1850's he expanded his diocesan college into the ambitious Mount St. Bernard's College and Seminary south of the city of Dubuque. He brought the first nuns into Iowa; he induced the Sisters of Charity, B. V. M., to transfer their order from Philadelphia to Dubuque, with the intention of employing some of them in the Indian schools along the frontier. This teaching order has had a marvelous growth, with schools not only in Iowa, but extending today from Chicago to California. Among its colleges the celebrated Clarke College for Women at Dubuque is named for Mother Mary Francis Clarke, the foundress of the order who so daringly led her band of eastern ladies across the Mississippi into the Iowa wilderness in 1843. Here were regis-



tered among the student body, daughters of generals, judges, senators, and governors prominent in the territory of what is now Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota. After a life of singular piety and usefulness, Mother Clarke passed away peacefully on Sunday, December 4, 1887. "Her venerable remains were borne to the chapel where the Sisters had so often knelt with her who now lay so motionless in the great sleep of death." On the day of her burial, the solemn requiem Mass was sung by the Rt. Rev. Henry Cosgrove of Davenport. Mother Clarke's memory was honored by a beautiful panegyric offered by Bishop Hennessy of Dubuque.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a teaching order of men, were brought by Loras from France. They taught in the Dubuque schools and in the Mount St. Bernard College. More dramatic was his welcoming of a group of Irish Cistercian monks in 1849. To these cowled Trappist cenobites he gave five hundred acres of land a few miles from the city of Dubuque, after they had met with refusal from eastern American bishops. In recent years their foundation, the New Melleray Abbey, has grown in numbers to such proportions in their huge Gothic stone monastery that they have now established a daughter-house in the Ozark hills of southern Missouri which already has thirty-five members of its own, vowed to silence and prayer.

The alert Iowa bishop had already in the 1840's



envisioned the erection of a hospital — which was to be the first hospital in Iowa. In 1845 he purchased ground for such an institution but was unable to start its building until 1852. In May of 1854 the "Welsh General" came to the help of the "French Bishop"; Senator George W. Jones, who had already made a generous contribution toward the hospital, introduced a successful motion in the United States Congress to use the building also as a marine hospital for the river cases of sickness on the numerous federal and private steamboats that stopped at Galena and Dubuque. With the funds thus appropriated, the hospital was enlarged and completed, and the Dubuque city council thereupon designated it as the City Hospital.

The farsighted Loras bought plots of ground in many of the infant towns of Iowa, which, scores of years after his death, were utilized for church and school sites for new Catholic parishes. In these, as well as in most of his other episcopal endeavors, he first used up his own family inheritance and then fell back on the financial help he received from the missionary societies of Europe. The three great organizations which poured their funds into the pioneer state of Iowa were the Propagation of the Faith Society of Lyons and Paris, France, the Leopoldine Society of Vienna, Austria, and the Ludwig Missionsverein of Munich, Germany.

What these three societies did for the Catholics



in the United States at large as well as in Iowa has never been fully told. The immensity of their charity and the wide-flung range of their cooperation has loomed so large, even in their printed *Reports* and *Annals*, that no American historian has had the opportunity to canvass all the social and religious facts that they contain for both Iowa and general church history. Millions of francs, florins, and crowns were sent to Loras and his successors for the building of the church in Iowa and Minnesota. Loras induced a settlement of Germans in Dubuque County, whose St. Boniface church was built with the help of the Leopoldine Society's funds, to honor that society by naming their town New Vienna, the title it bears today.

Mathias Loras was a tremendous agitator in behalf of Catholic colonization of the Northwest. Already in 1841, just two years after his arrival in Iowa, he established contact with the recently organized Irish Emigrant Society of New York through a committee of Dubuque Catholic laymen, who unfolded through the New York Catholic press the advantages to be found by settlers in the West. Bishop Loras himself wrote many letters during the following years on the subject of colonization to the chief Catholic papers of the country — to those in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Louisville, St. Louis, and to the German *Wahrheits-Freund* of Cincinnati. Some of these letters occasionally appeared in European newspapers.



The Iowa bishop visioned the great West peopled with the Catholic immigrants flocking to America. He wished to draw them from the slums of the eastern cities where they were hewers of wood and drawers of water, and make them self-reliant and intelligent farmers of the generous Northwest where lands were cheap and natural resources were unlimited. But alas! The narrow-visioned prelates of the Atlantic seaboard frowned on his efforts among their peoples, and the fair promise of his colonization plans was considerably blighted. A committee of three Dubuque gentlemen, headed by Judge Charles Corkery, sent by Loras to carry propaganda into the large eastern cities, was refused permission to address meetings in parish halls and church basements by one of the prelates.

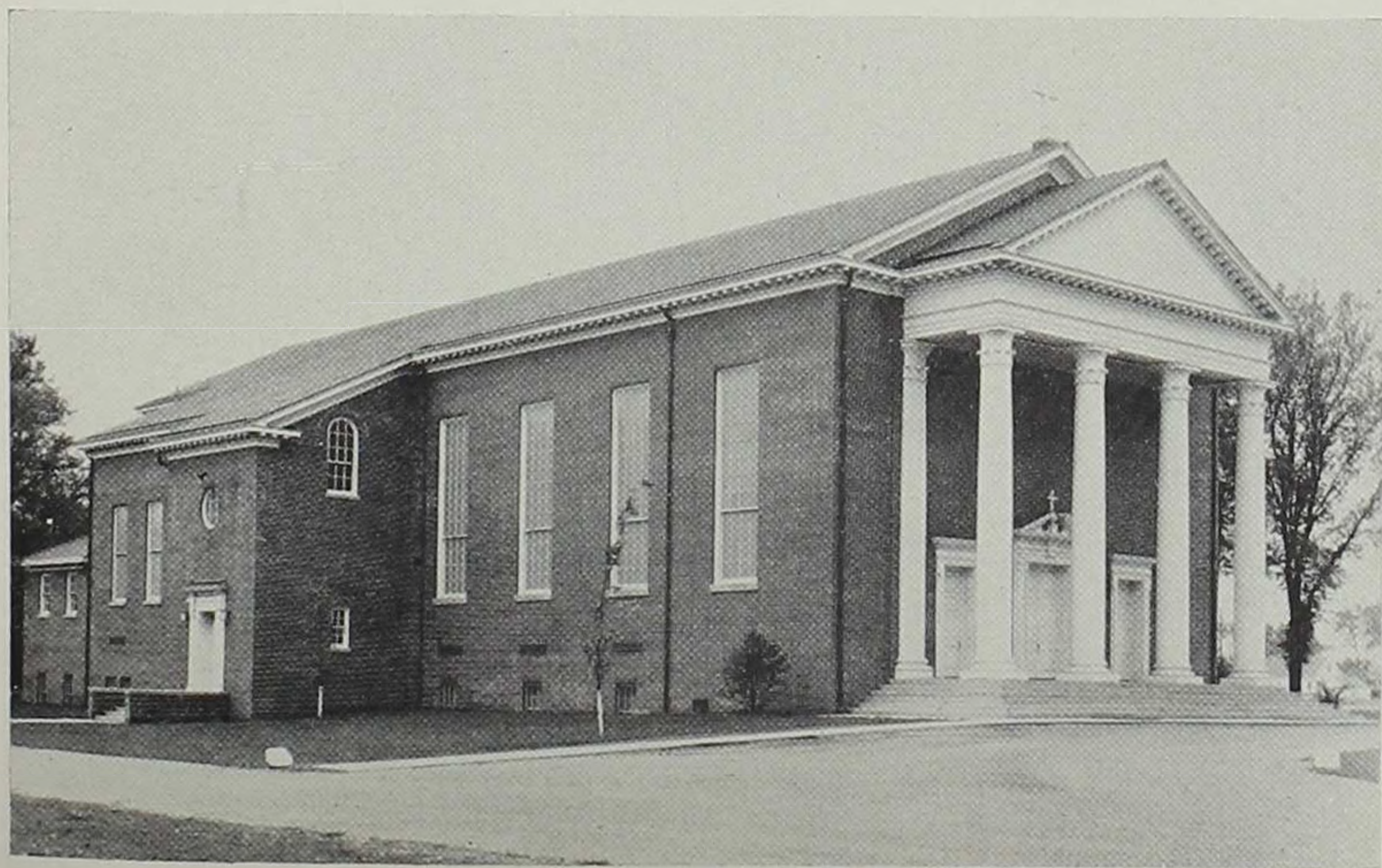
In June of 1855 Bishop Loras deputed Father Jeremiah Treacy of Garryowen in Jackson County to go with seven laymen to northeastern Nebraska, just across the Missouri from the village of Sioux City, which was just then emerging into being, to select a good site for a colony. Father Treacy offered up Mass in the Sioux City district in the home of a Frenchman on the Floyd River. The first missionary who had visited the present site of Sioux City, Father Christian Hoecken, S. J., a companion of the illustrious Father De Smet, had preceded Father Treacy by five years. In 1850, during the three days he tarried there in Novem-



SOME IOWA ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES



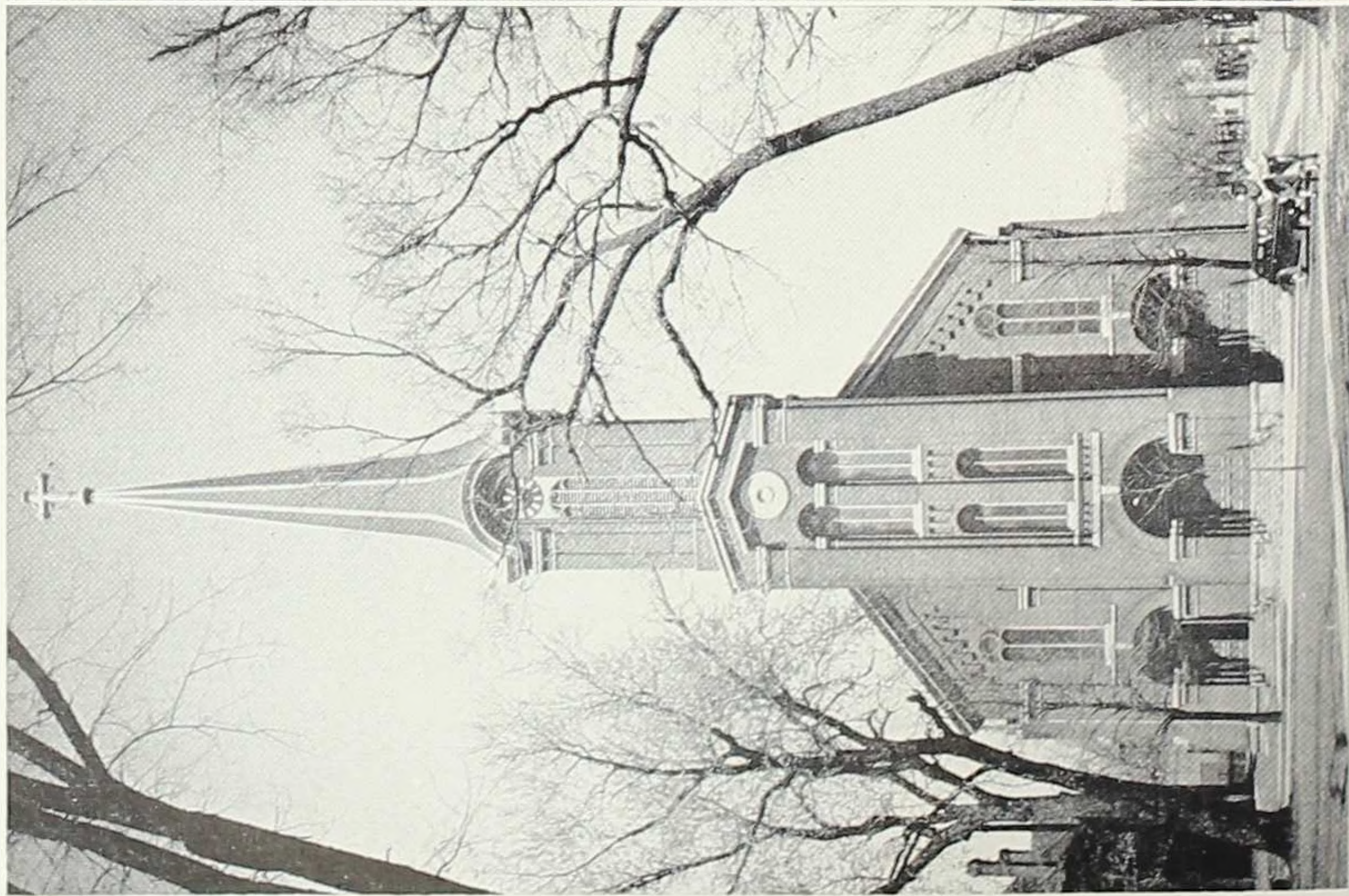
St. Anthony's Church — Davenport  
Oldest Church Building in Iowa, Built in 1837



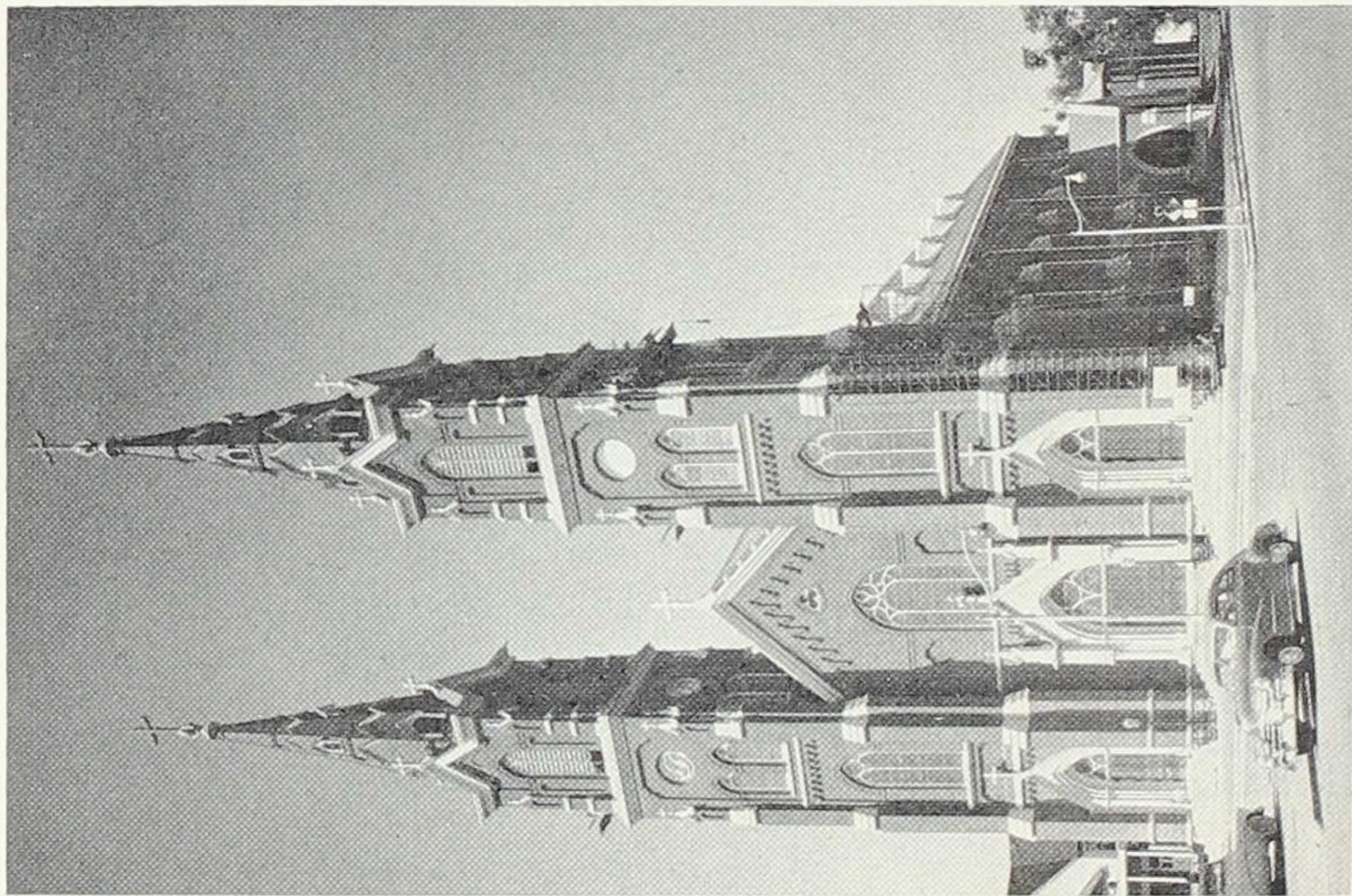
St. Edward's Church — Waterloo



SOME REPRESENTATIVE IOWA CATHOLIC CHURCHES



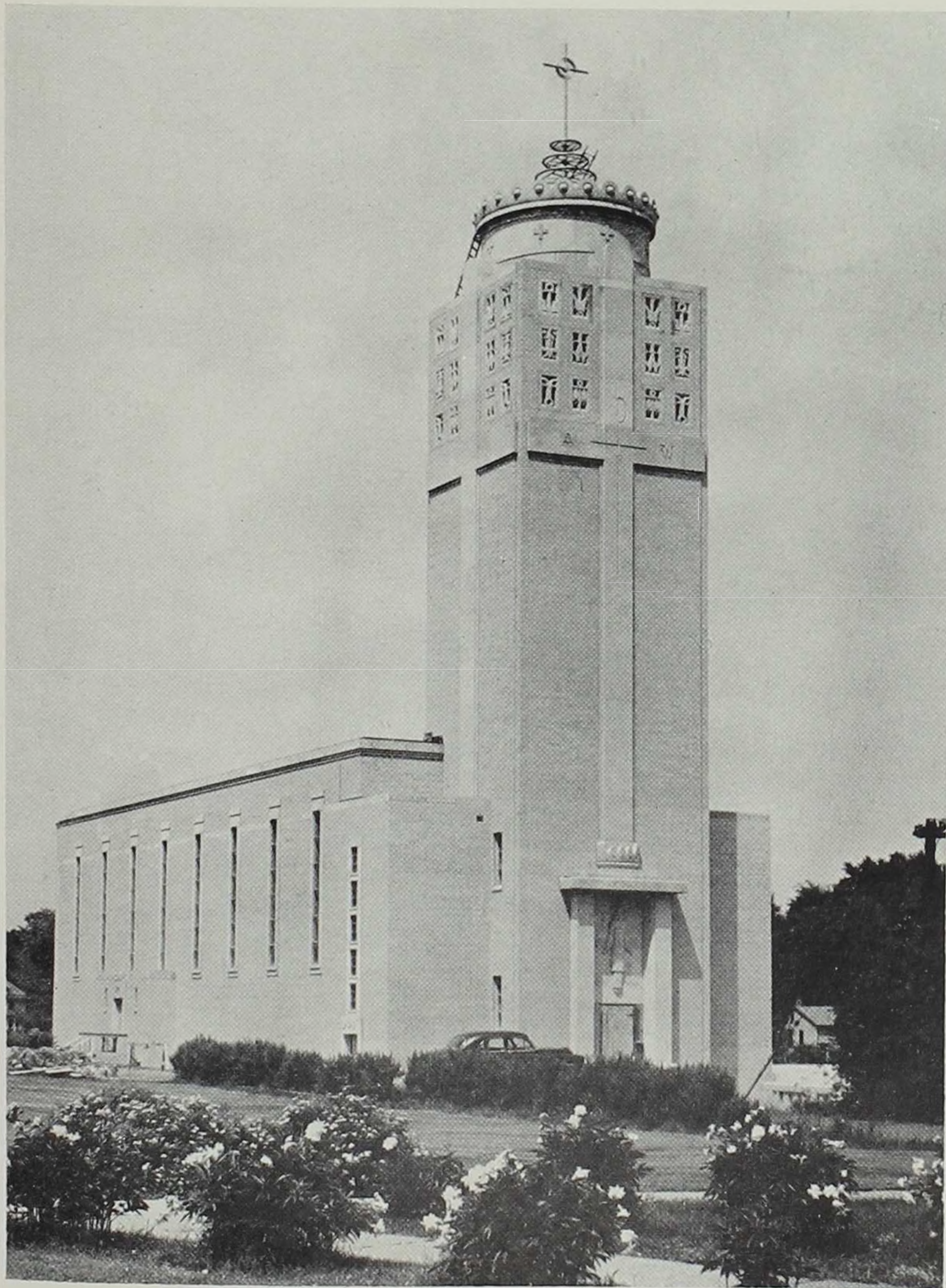
St. Mary's Church



St. Francis Xavier's Church



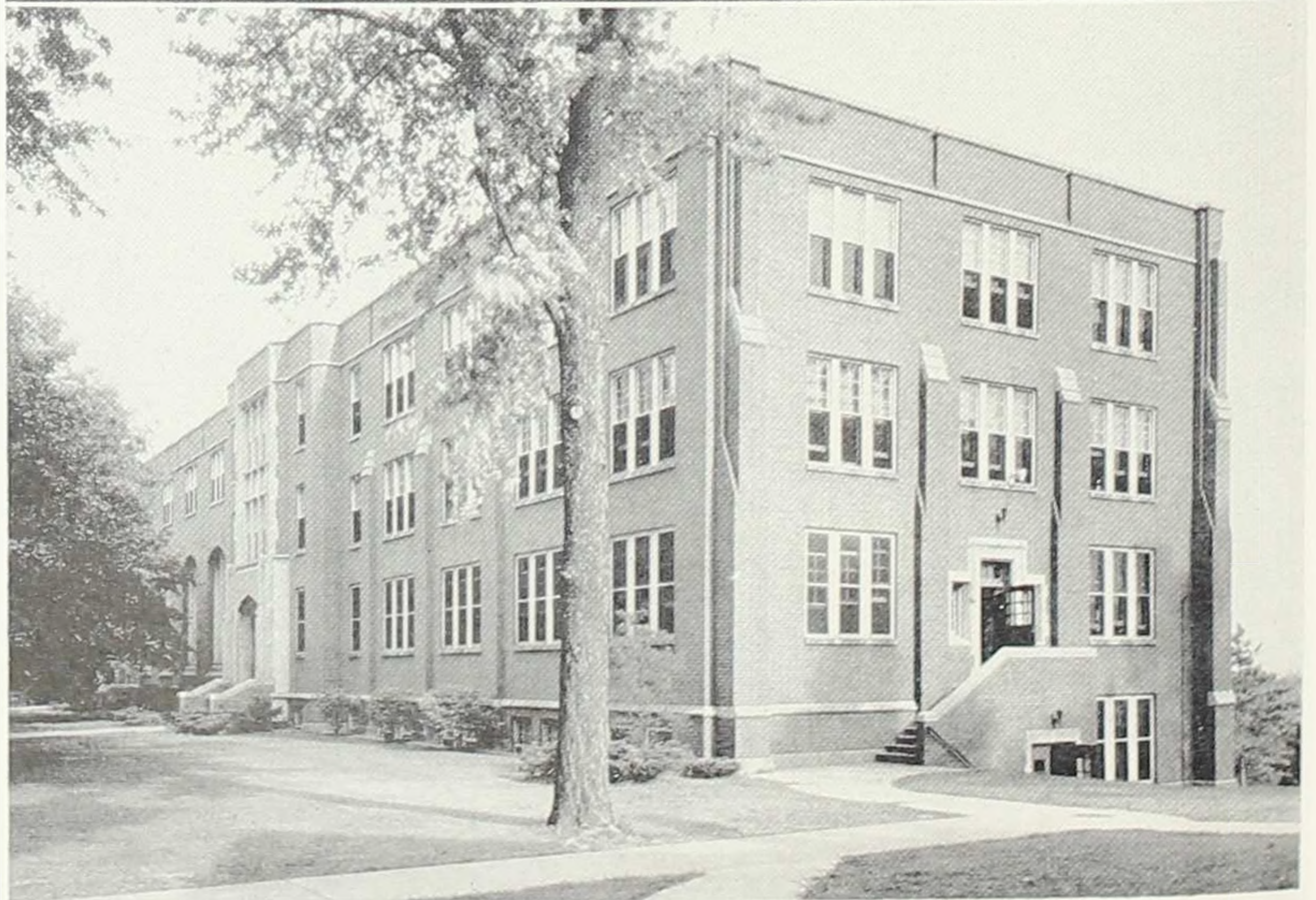
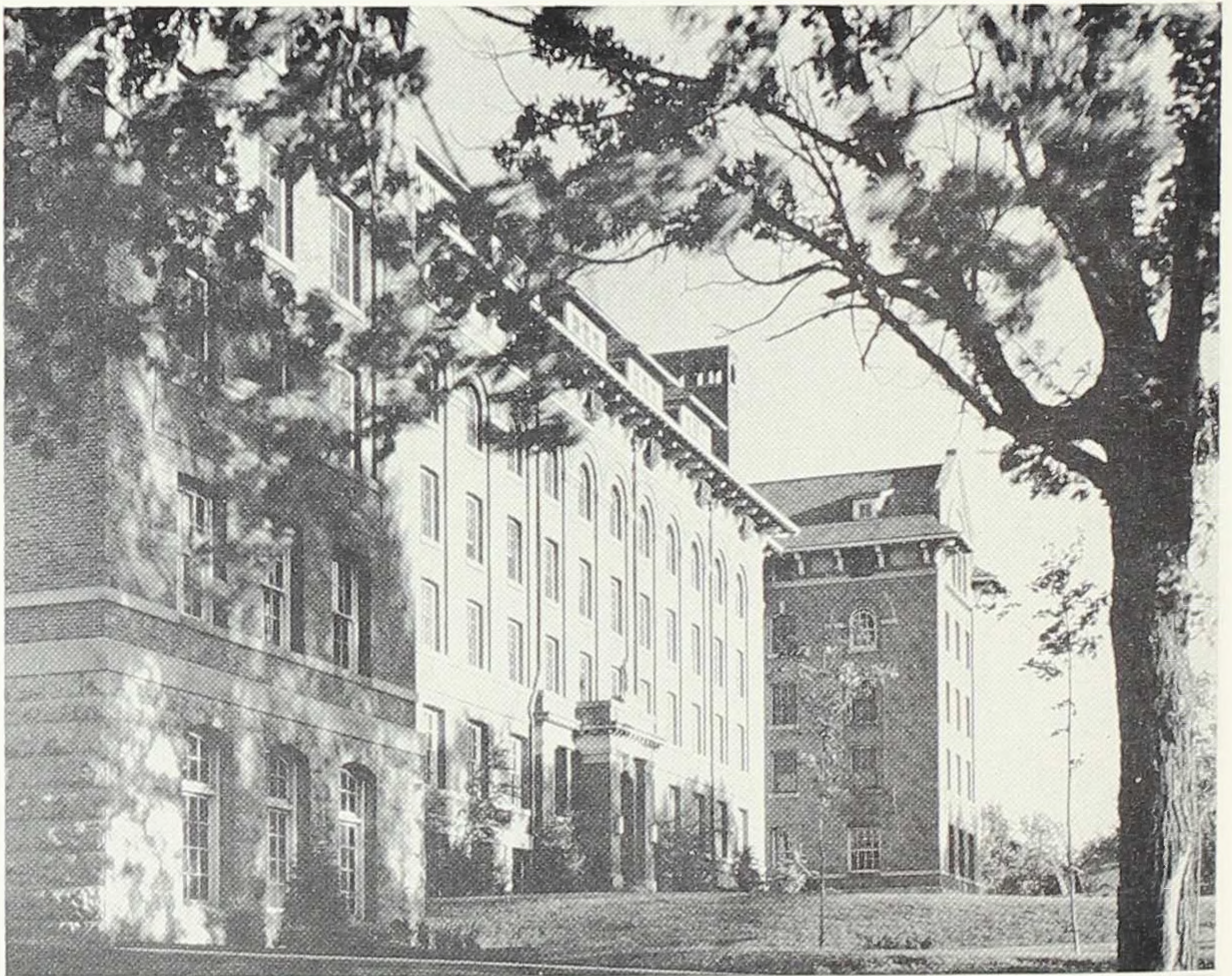
CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION



Chapel of Christ the King  
St. Ambrose College — Davenport



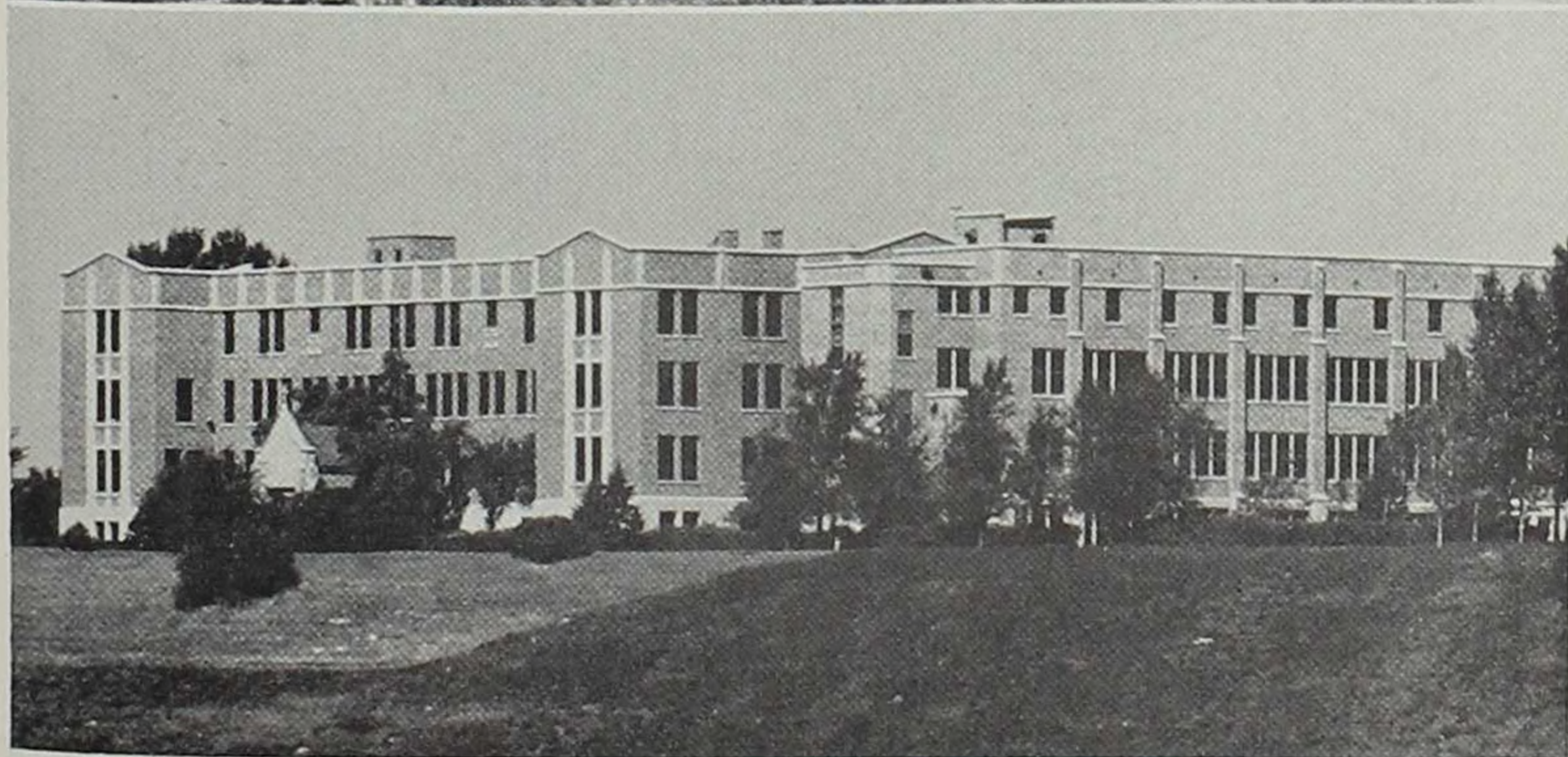
SOME CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN IOWA



Top: Keane Hall, Loras College at Dubuque  
Bottom: Marycrest College at Davenport



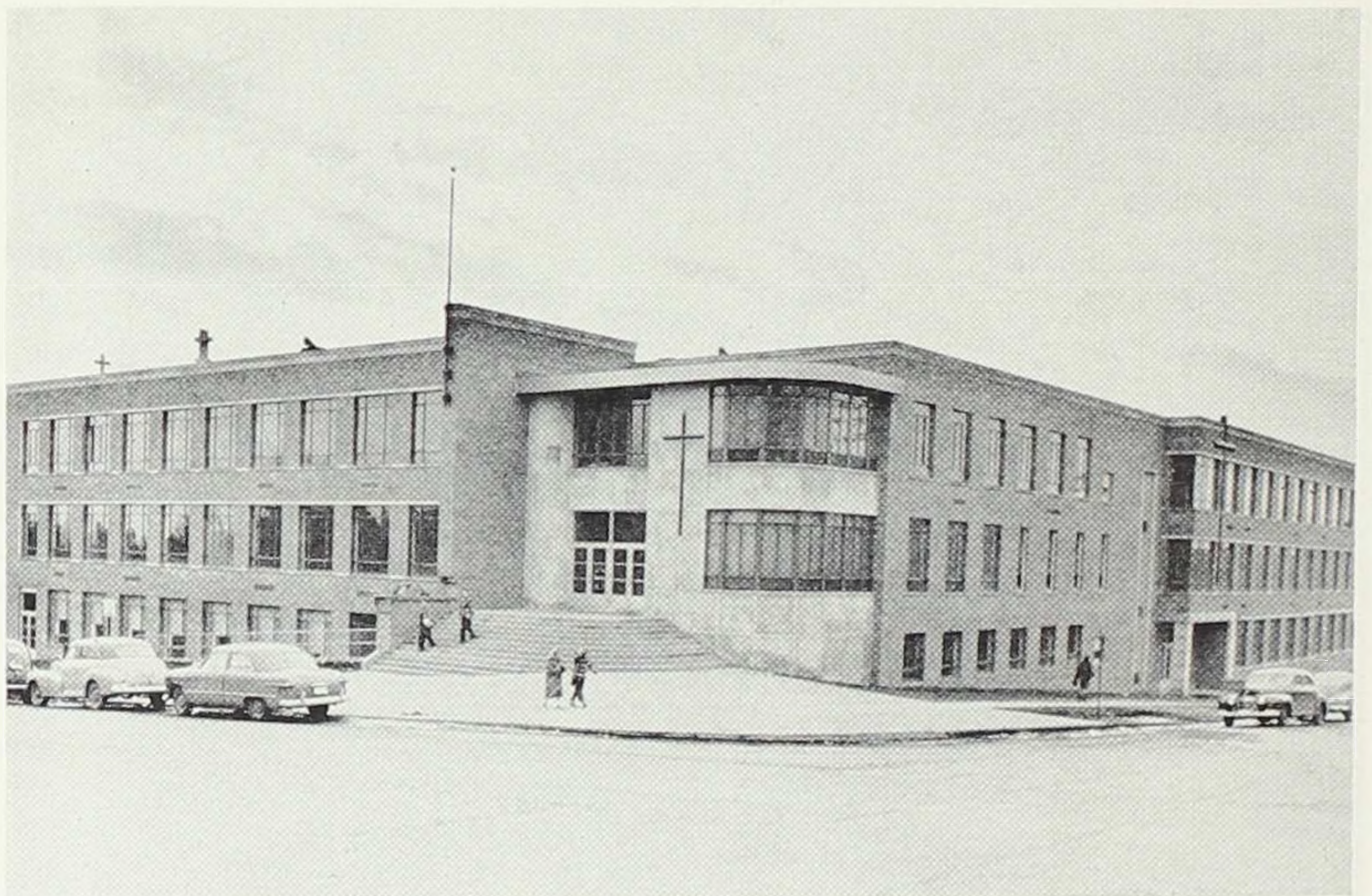
SOME CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN IOWA



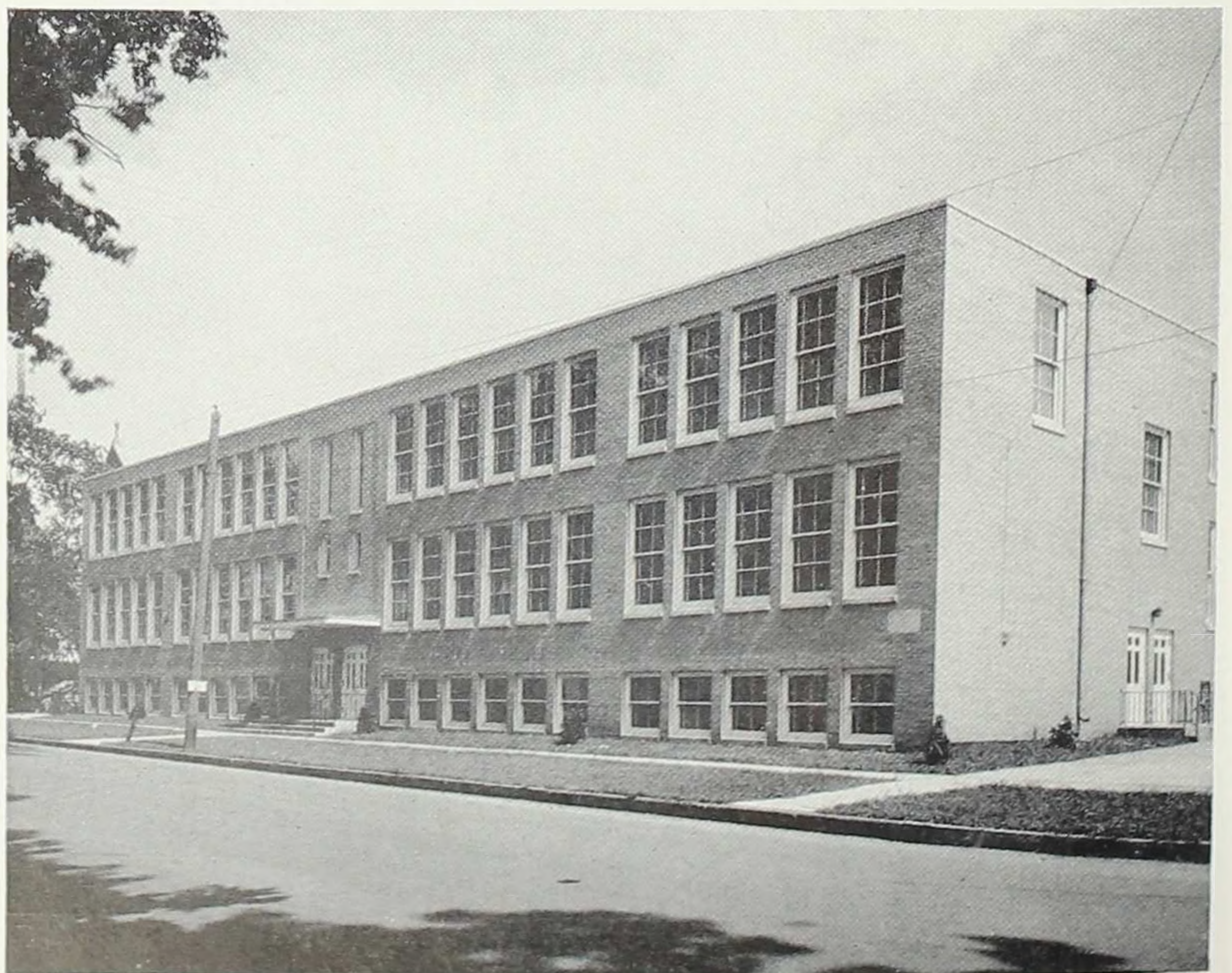
*Top: Clarke College at Dubuque  
Bottom: Briar Cliff College at Sioux City*



CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN IOWA



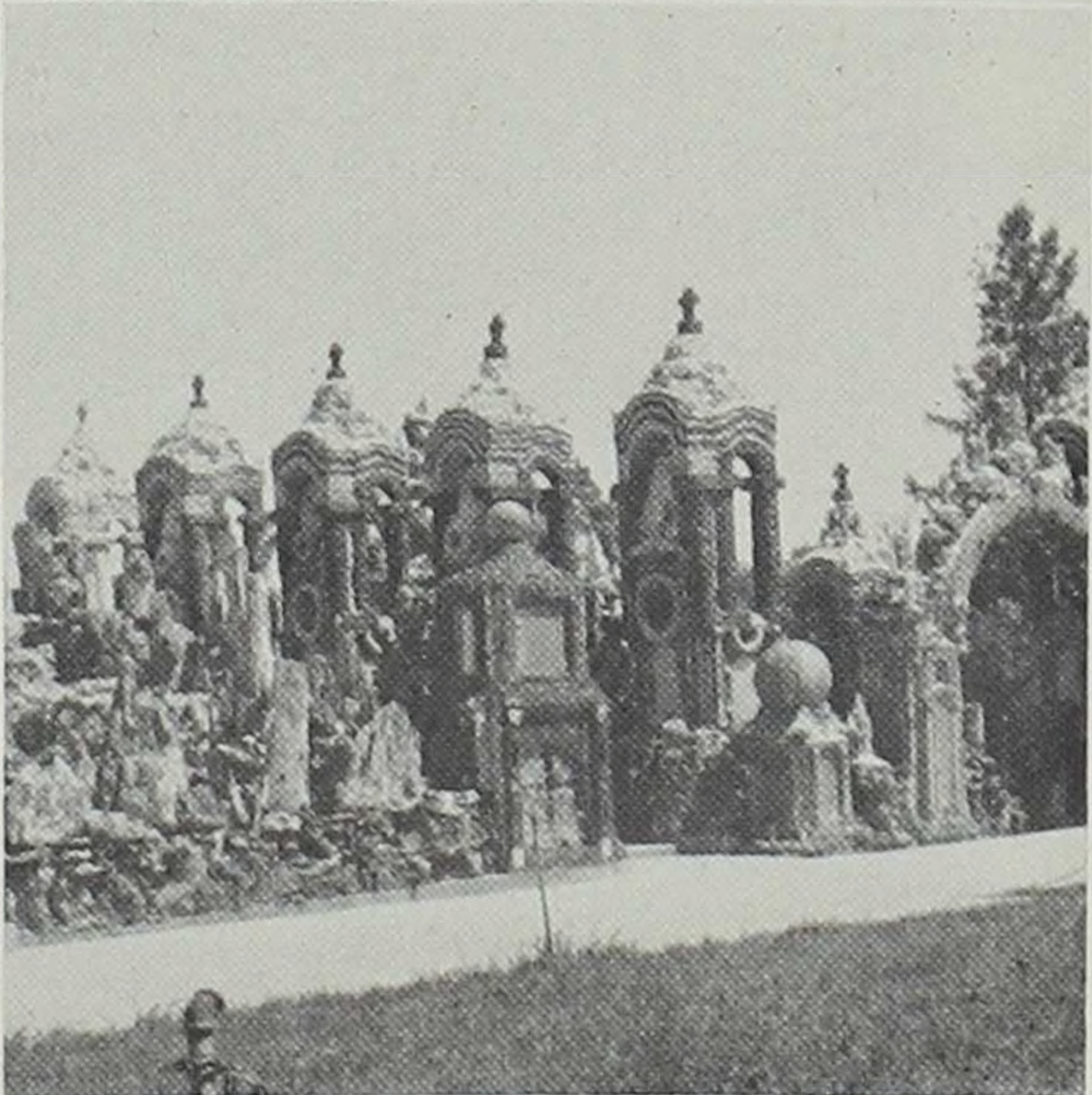
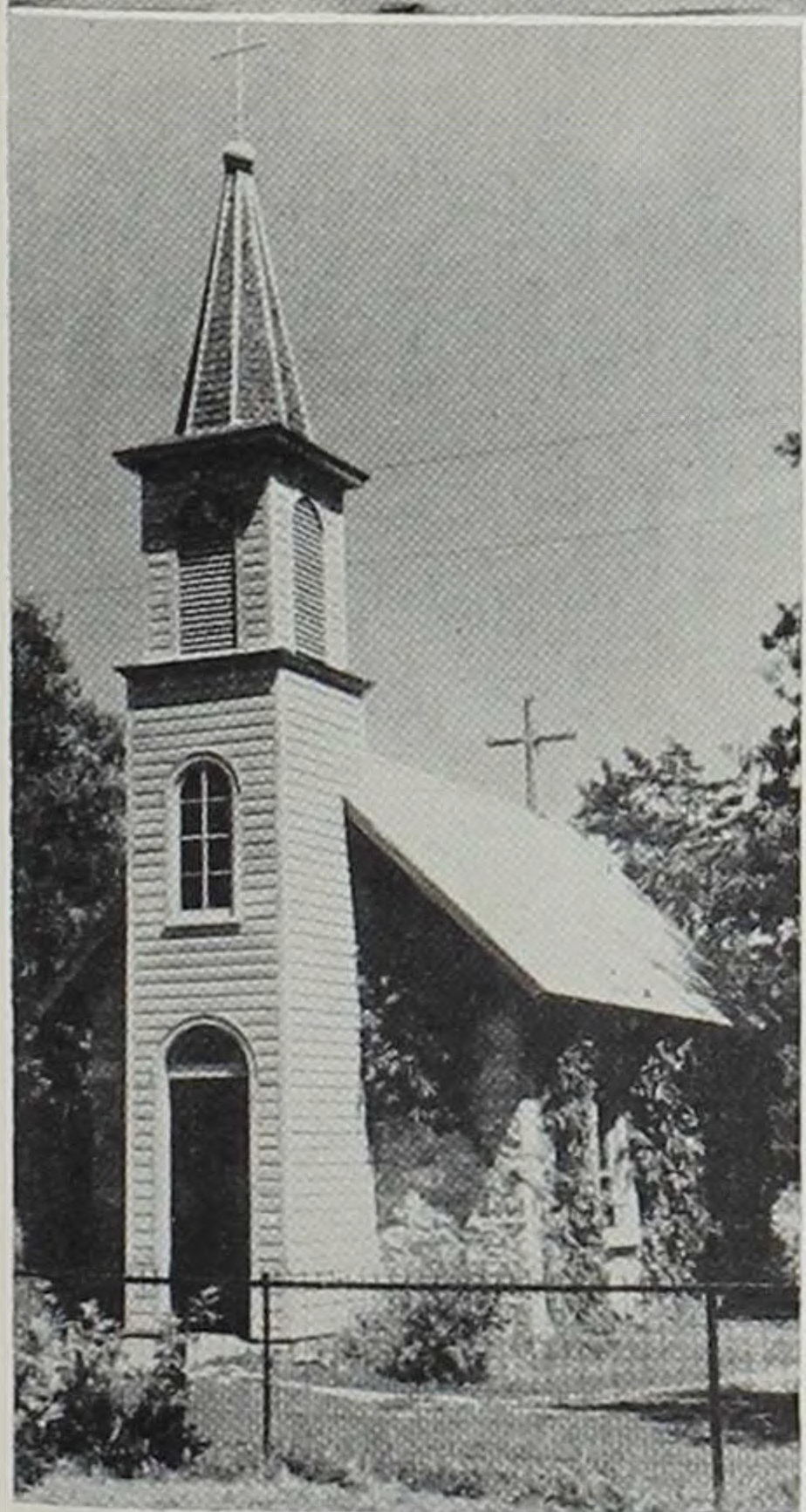
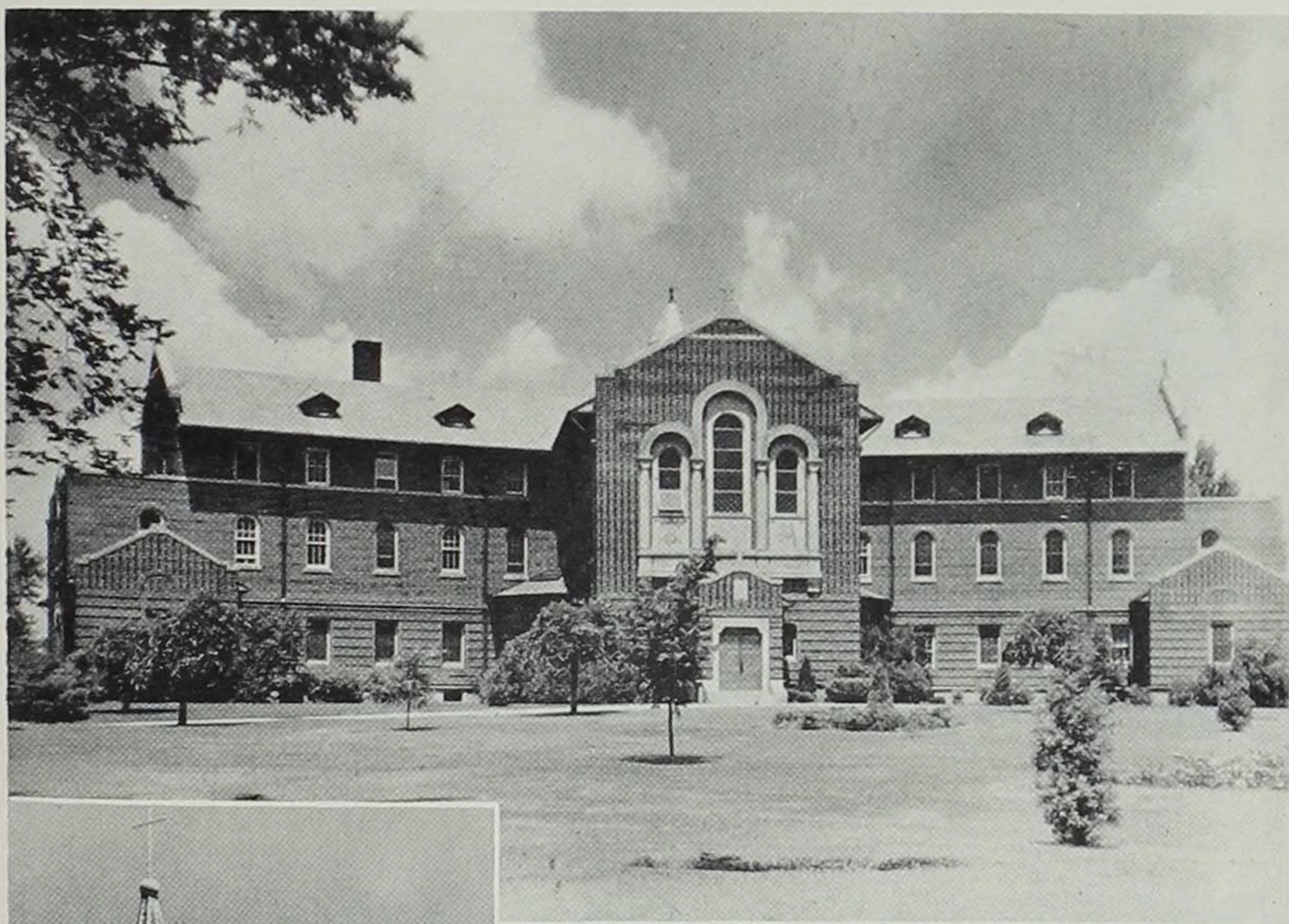
Immaculate Conception Parochial School, Charles City



Heelan High School, Sioux City

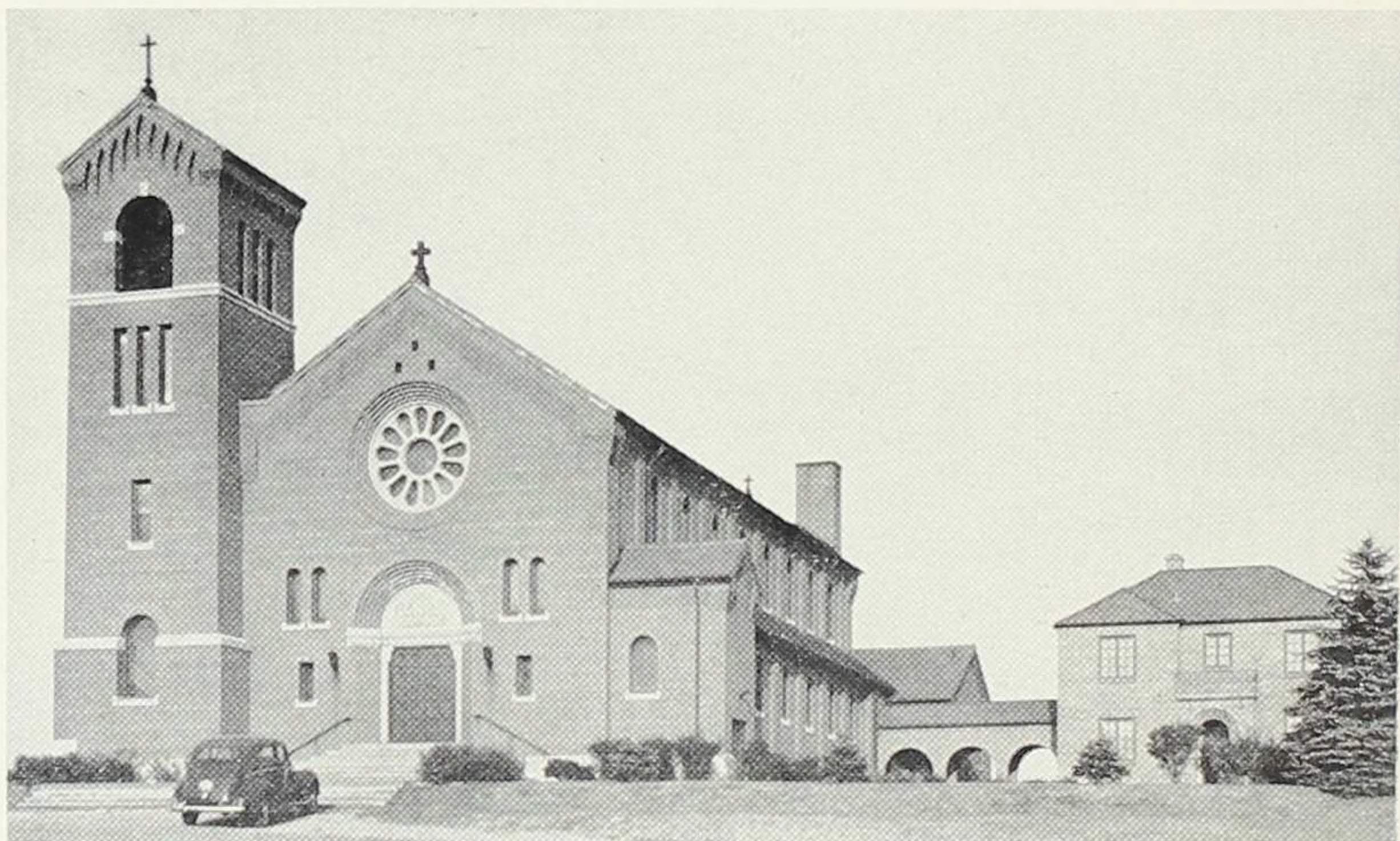


CATHOLIC LANDMARKS IN IOWA

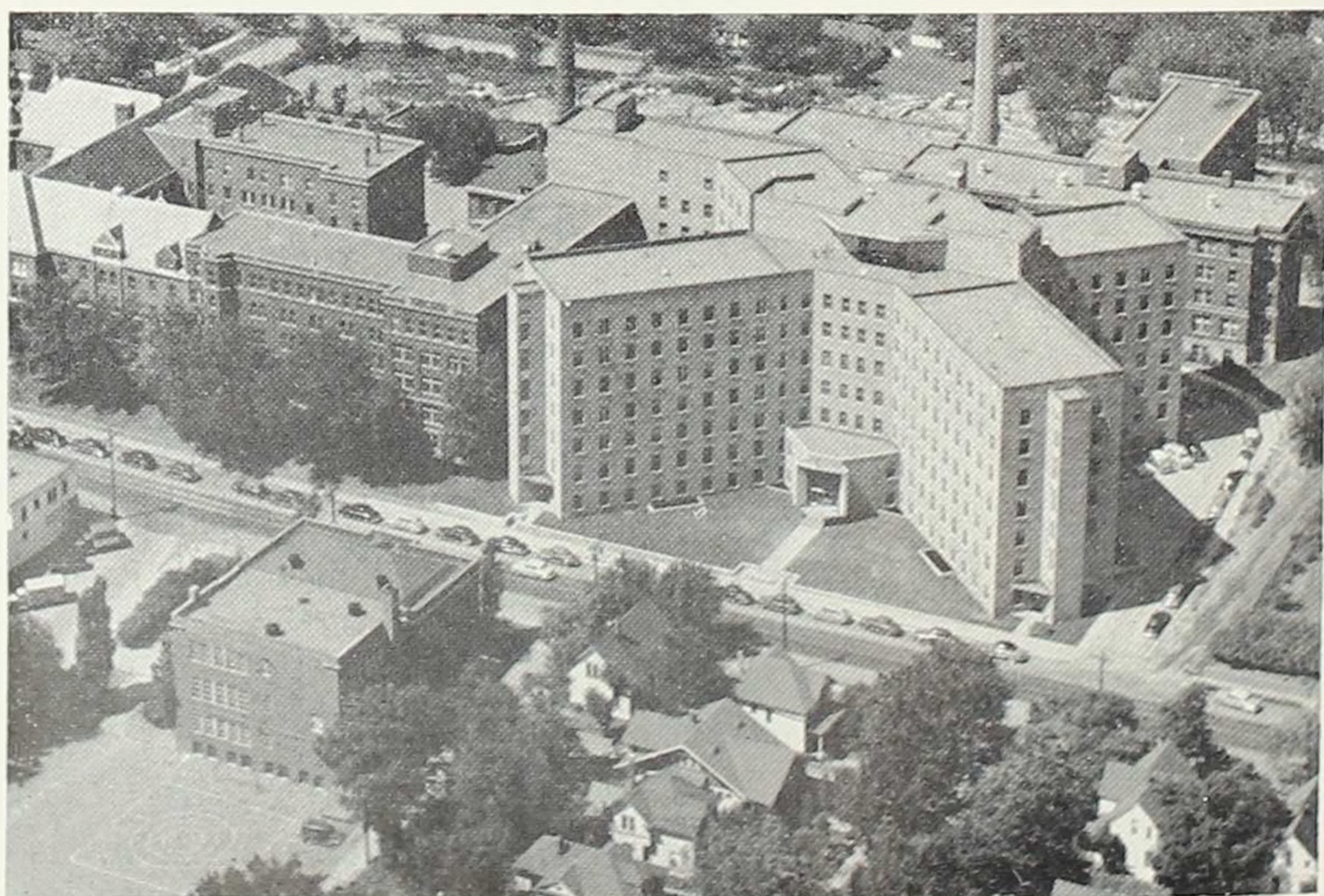


Top: St. Gabriel's Monastery — Des Moines  
Bottom: Left — World's Smallest Church at Festina; Right — Grotto at West Bend





St. Bridget's Church at Victor



St. Joseph's Hospital — Sioux City



ber, he had baptized thirteen whites and half-breeds.

The bishop and Father Treacy organized an expedition in the spring of 1856. In April, with twenty-five families and eighteen ox-drawn wagons, the priest left Garryowen and, passing through Sioux City after eight weeks, entered into northeastern Nebraska and opened up a settlement on the Elk River, called St. John's. He later continued his labors up and down the Missouri, at Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Omaha, and other points, and at the outbreak of the Civil War became an army chaplain, serving most of the time with the army of General Rosecrans. Father Treacy died in St. Louis in 1889.

In addition to these remarks on the work of Mathias Loras, mention should be made of the fact that both he and his vicar-general, the Abbé Joseph Cretin (later Bishop of St. Paul), entertained strong views on the liquor problems in Iowa. Both of them natives of France, where wine was the common beverage of all peoples, and both of them strangers at first to American customs and attitudes, they became zealous advocates of total abstinence by their words and by their actions. They became more than that. Not zealots or fanatics were they, but later writers referred to them as "active prohibitionists." Bishop Loras organized a number of total abstinence societies in Iowa and personally administered the pledge to hun-



dreds of persons. Later, at St. Paul, when the Minnesota legislature had voted the passage of a strict "Maine Liquor Law," Bishop Cretin ordered the bells of his cathedral to be rung in joyous approval.

M. M. HOFFMAN



## Bishop Smyth, 1858-1865

At the death of Mathias Loras in February of 1858 Bishop Clement Smyth became the second bishop of the Iowa Catholic Church. This was a singular thing, this withdrawing a monk from behind cloistered walls and placing him on an episcopal throne. For Clement Smyth came from that strictest of all monastic orders vowed to penance and wed to silence, the Cistercians, a branch of which, the Irish Trappists, had established their foundation just a few miles outside of Dubuque in 1849 — the monastery of Our Lady of New Melleray. A year later another monk from that same house, James Myles O'Gorman, was appointed the first bishop of Omaha. Strangely enough, both of these gentlemen were graduates of that great Protestant institution of learning in Dublin — Trinity College. Yet far stranger and far more extraordinary is the fact that for more than three hundred years in the entire Catholic world these appointments of Iowa monks to bishoprics are the sole instances where men vowed to the severest kind of quiet and contemplative life were ever permitted to leave their Cistercian order to become leaders of a diocese.

Another interesting fact to be noticed with the



appointment of Bishop Smyth is the change from the French nationalistic rule dating from Bishop Rosati of St. Louis — a Neapolitan Italian but a Gallic churchman with a French administration for all of that — and from the sons of old Lyons, Loras of Dubuque and Cretin of St. Paul, to the rise of the Irish ascendancy in the Church of the Northwest. From the days of Father Marquette and Julien Dubuque the atmosphere of the Upper Mississippi Valley had been that of the *ancien régime* of France. In the 1830's and 1840's a heavy Irish and German immigration had begun to penetrate to the West; and a few years before Loras' death Bohemian or Czech settlements had sprung up in the vicinities of Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Fort Atkinson. Thus these elements form the national extractions of contemporary Iowa Catholicism.

Bishop Clement Smyth was cast as the actor of a melancholy role in the drama of the development of the Iowa Catholic Church. Working courageously with his fellow monks through painful years to hew out of the early Iowa wilderness a monastic house of prayer, he had the episcopal honors thrust on him rather suddenly. He had been called in to the see city from his rough-hewn Trappist halls to uphold the faltering arms of the dying Loras. Less than a year later the state and the nation were plunged into a deep economic crisis. A national financial and industrial crash had



occurred in 1857, and Iowa began to feel it keenly in 1858. Yet during these years of distress and destitution Bishop Smyth succeeded in completing the building of a new cathedral, which had been started under Bishop Loras, and in paying off the major portion of its huge cost.

Hardly had Bishop Smyth emerged from this period of economic despondency when he beheld Iowa and the Union sucked into the bloody maelstrom of the Civil War. Although the Catholic population of Iowa showed a steady increase even during the Civil War, the number of Bishop Smith's clergy failed to increase. He lamented the fact that he could not develop a native clergy, and annually brought into the diocese numbers of priests from abroad, a goodly percentage coming from one institution, All Hallows College in Ireland. Whatever the cause, a surprisingly large number of priests left Iowa during the seven or eight years of his episcopal regime.

While the income from the diocese was gradually shrinking, and while the funds that were collected were being applied to payments for the new cathedral, the bishop felt compelled to abandon the upkeep of several of the diocesan institutions. Mount St. Bernard's College, so hopefully built by Bishop Loras, had been gradually declining and was allowed to slip into temporary somnolence. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, whom Bishop Loras had brought from France, and who taught a



high school near the cathedral as well as in the college, departed from the diocese and left their vacant buildings as testimonials to the depressing times. The hospital which Bishop Loras had built with much patience and grief was another institution which soon passed into "innocuous desuetude."

Yet Bishop Smyth's zeal never diminished; it carried him on extensive journeys through his large diocese. During one year he traveled over three thousand miles in Iowa, and the major portion of this was done in the heavy open wagons of the farmers as the railroads covered as yet very limited distances. On these long and frequent trips he found a great increase in the number of orphans, due principally to the deaths of the fathers on the battlefields and in the hospitals. A number of Catholic orphans were being adopted into non-Catholic families. What worried Bishop Smyth still more was the fact that the great State Orphan Asylum which the Iowa authorities were contemplating building for all the orphan children of deceased soldiers would be, as he believed, completely under Protestant sectarian influence, "whereby many of our poor children would be perverted and lose their faith." So he proceeded to erect a Catholic home for orphans at Dubuque. He further feared a loss of faith among the children due to their attendance at the public schools in some of which at that time he felt convinced that



he had detected anti-Catholic influences and in which the Protestant Bible was read and taught. He had in Iowa at this time a few Catholic schools, and realizing the need of extending the Catholic school system, he arranged to introduce the Christian Brothers, a teaching order, into the diocese.

What was gratifyingly clear to all patriots during these troublous times was the staunch loyalty of Bishop Smyth to the cause of the Union. Bishop Loras, up to the time of his death, had been fairly sympathetic toward the views of the South. His long and happy residence in Mobile and the Southland as well as his former status as a slaveholder and a leader among the Southern aristocracy probably influenced him in his sympathy. Clement Smyth, however, throughout the war years was a strong upholder of the principles of the North.

In the spring of 1865 the news of the complete fall of the South and of the assassination of President Lincoln had aroused mingled feelings in Dubuque and especially in the cathedral parish where there were a number of Copperheads, anti-administration critics of the war policies. Bishop Smyth received anonymous letters demanding that he cease denouncing the assassins of Lincoln and applauding the North in his sermons, sermons in which he had really appealed to the people to forget the rancors of the war and to rededicate their national and civic life to Christian unity. The



bishop on a later Sunday finally replied publicly to these criticisms. That very night incendiaries set fire to his coach house, and the structure as well as his horses and his carriage were totally destroyed.

The feeling of indignation over this outrageous act was very pronounced among the people of Dubuque and elsewhere in Iowa wherever the news was heard. During the mid-summer Bishop Smyth made an extended confirmation tour to Des Moines and other points in Iowa, and on his return he was astonished and gratified to find awaiting him a striking gift from the people of the city. His published letter of gratitude in the newspapers of Dubuque contained this paragraph which indicates the reason for his surprise and happiness:

During my absence in Des Moines the citizens of Dubuque had the coach house, etc., built up anew, and lest that house should remain untenanted, those same generous friends on last Saturday presented me with a beautiful new carriage, horses, etc., of which even European nobility might well be proud. Were this the gift of Catholics alone I should feel truly grateful, but how deep and lasting must be my gratitude for this gift, since gentlemen of every religious denomination had united and generously contributed to purchase for me this solid proof of their friendship.

Father John F. Kempker, in his *History of the Catholic Church in Iowa*, states that under Bishop Smyth's "most exemplary and Christian administration, the diocese had obtained the number of about 48 priests, 80 churches, 20 stations or out



missions, and a Catholic population of about 90,000 inhabitants." In discussions and disputes Bishop Smyth never failed to bring about a reconciliation even among the most bitter enemies.

Clement Smyth had never possessed a strong constitution and he felt keenly his heavy burdens. His life had been quiet and saintly with little touch of the dramatic about it; so was his death, which occurred on September 23, 1865.

M. M. HOFFMAN



## The Diocesan Pattern in Iowa

*Bishop Hennessy, 1865-1900*

A protracted era of growth and expansion in the Iowa Catholic Church coincided with the long years of the spiritual reign of Bishop John Hennessy who succeeded Bishop Smyth to the see of Dubuque. Bishop Hennessy, born in Ireland but educated in America, had been a seminary president and a prominent parish priest in Missouri before his arrival in Iowa. During post-Civil War times immigration reached a flood tide, and many Irish and Germans coming to Iowa rapidly increased the number of Catholics.

In the sense of not having the problem of a complex human melting pot, the Church in Iowa was indeed fortunate. While other sections of the nation, especially the East, were to be inundated in the coming decades until World War I with the myriads from scores of foreign countries with diverse languages, customs, and national backgrounds, in some instances so confusing as to be almost insoluble problems to the sorely perplexed bishops, Iowa drew as its major Catholic sources only from Ireland and the German lands. With the cessation of immigration almost forty years ago the membership of the Iowa Church has become almost entirely native-born today.



To meet this rapid growth in numbers Bishop Hennessy brought into his diocese Irish and German clergymen to such an extent that for a time they easily outnumbered the American priests. The Iowa Church — as yet unbuilt though already so vastly peopled — had at first, as the reader must have observed, to rely largely on European volunteer priests; men who, meriting many sorts of praise, do not merit in many cases that of having understood American principles and ideas. Their influence (historically comprehensible considering what was happening in Europe) showed in an aversion to the customs of the Republic, and often in the determined segregation of national groups from the ordinary current of American life.

A zealous protagonist of the parochial school system, the indefatigable churchman John Hennessy directed his principal energies to Christian education. Wherever possible, from the Mississippi across to the Missouri, schools were built and heroic sacrifices were made to the end that every Catholic child should be educated in Catholic schools. Considerable and continued opposition was offered by some Catholics, not only for economic reasons, but because they considered the program an attack on the public schools.

That this program of Bishop Hennessy succeeded so well was due in great measure to his phenomenal ability in inducing various teaching



sisterhoods to come to Iowa to take over the rapidly expanding number of schools. At his silver jubilee celebration as a bishop in 1891, he stated in a public address: "Twenty-five years ago . . . there were no schools worth speaking of. In Ottumwa, Muscatine, Davenport, Des Moines and Dubuque; these are the only cities that I can remember in which there were schools conducted by Sisters." Those few nuns whom he found then were soon augmented by new orders of teachers. Three of the more prominent of these orders may be mentioned here. The Sisters of Mercy first came to De Witt and Davenport. Today, besides teaching numerous schools, they conduct a number of hospitals throughout the state. From Ireland in 1874 came the Presentation nuns who have shown a vigorous growth since their arrival in Iowa. And in 1875 there appeared in Iowa City a little band of religious ladies who had been exiled from Germany. They had previously been hospital sisters, who, after having nursed the wounded on the battlefields of the Austro-Prussian and Franco-German wars and having been awarded the Iron Cross by the Empress Augusta, were expelled during the persecution of Chancellor Bismarck. Today the schools of these Franciscan Sisters of Dubuque adorn the entire state.

The Dubuque diocesan college, temporarily closed during the Civil War, was reopened and successfully continued by Bishop Hennessy, and



much credit belongs to him for his courage and faith. Since there were numerous college casualties everywhere during the Civil War, the loss of the only Catholic institution of higher learning in Iowa was by no means singular. It would have been surprising had the third bishop of Dubuque, consecrated in the Dubuque Cathedral on September 30, 1866, allowed the diocesan institution to die and be forgotten. For the third chancellor of Dubuque College was made of sterner stuff. John Hennessy as a boy in his native Limerick had had his heart inflamed with a love for Christian learning by the old-fashioned Irish schoolmasters who had been his tutors in the Classics. Little wonder that the *Twenty-Ninth Annual Catalogue of St. Joseph's College* (1901-1902), gives September 8, 1873, as the date of the founding of St. Joseph's College by Bishop Hennessy.

This flame for Christian teaching burned fiercer during John Hennessy's maturer years. In the Third Plenary Council of the American bishops held at Baltimore in 1894, he was the strongest advocate of the parochial school system, even in the face of powerful opposition. There is a strong current tradition that John Hennessy was the deciding influence that committed the Catholic Church in the United States to its present policy in this regard.

It was under Bishop Hennessy that hospitals, orphans' homes, and other asylums were erected



at various points in the diocese. In 1881 the southern half of Iowa was separated from the see of Dubuque and formed into the new diocese of Davenport. Yet — for such was the growth of Catholicity in Iowa — in 1893 the recently reduced diocese of Dubuque was elevated to the status of an archdiocese with Davenport, Omaha, Wichita, and Sioux Falls as its suffragan sees. During succeeding years various other dioceses in other states were suffragan to Dubuque, but today that archdiocese has as its only suffragans the three other dioceses in Iowa — Davenport, Sioux City, and Des Moines.

### *The Archdiocese of Dubuque*

At John Hennessy's death in 1900, his successor as archbishop of Dubuque was John Joseph Keane, formerly rector of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. Hardly had this cultured churchman been installed when the western half of his see was cut away to form the new diocese of Sioux City. After eleven years of active service, during which time his zeal for total abstinence made him a marked foe of the liquor traffic, he resigned and was succeeded as archbishop in 1911 by his namesake, James John Keane, formerly bishop of Cheyenne.

Archbishop James Keane was the first American-born churchman to preside over the see of Dubuque. Reared on a Minnesota farm and later



in life president of St. Thomas College in St. Paul, he venerated the traditions of Loras and Cretin and made a successful essay at applying their practical wisdom to the problems of the western Church. On the splendid foundations laid by his predecessors in the Dubuque diocese, he expanded the charitable and school activities of his church and, above all, put the Dubuque diocesan college on a solid financial and academic basis. Although the United States had entered World War I in 1917, Archbishop Keane launched and successfully completed an endowment campaign for the college of over a million dollars, and later received \$200,000 more from the Rockefeller Foundation.

With the great growth of this college in students and in numbers it was decided to name it "Dubuque College." As Julien Dubuque, the city's founder, had been a Catholic, and as the college itself had been since 1839 the institution of higher education of the diocese of Dubuque, it was quite natural that this name should be the one chosen and inserted in the new articles of incorporation early in the year 1914. But this name in a few years brought about a unique and interesting series of complications. The Dubuque German College, originally a Presbyterian seminary for the education of ministerial students, and for a long time known as the German Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest, had stated in its own incorporation instrument that it was to have



three departments known respectively as Dubuque seminary, Dubuque college, and Dubuque academy. This, according to its president, brought about confusion and conflict because the chartered name of the Dubuque diocesan college was Dubuque College.

The disagreement of the two institutions over their claims to the name of "Dubuque College" was accentuated at this time by the almost fierce athletic rivalry that prevailed, as both colleges for several years boasted of athletic clubs that ranked among the finest in the West. The dispute was finally brought into the courts and one of the most interesting legal cases in the history of Iowa ensued. The "Dubuque College Name Case," as it was known, promised to take classic rank with the famous Dartmouth College case of Daniel Webster's day. Formidable batteries of legal talent faced each other in forensic debate. From the sublime oratorical flights reminiscent of Webster's immortal words, "It is a small college, sir, but there are those that love it," the descent to the comical was accomplished by an argument over a barrel of sauerkraut addressed to "Dubuque College" and which had been shunted back and forth between the kitchens of the two institutions, vainly seeking a welcome haven. The diocesan college was victorious in the district court, but the Iowa Supreme Court, to which the case was appealed, stated that a retrial was necessary. At this point



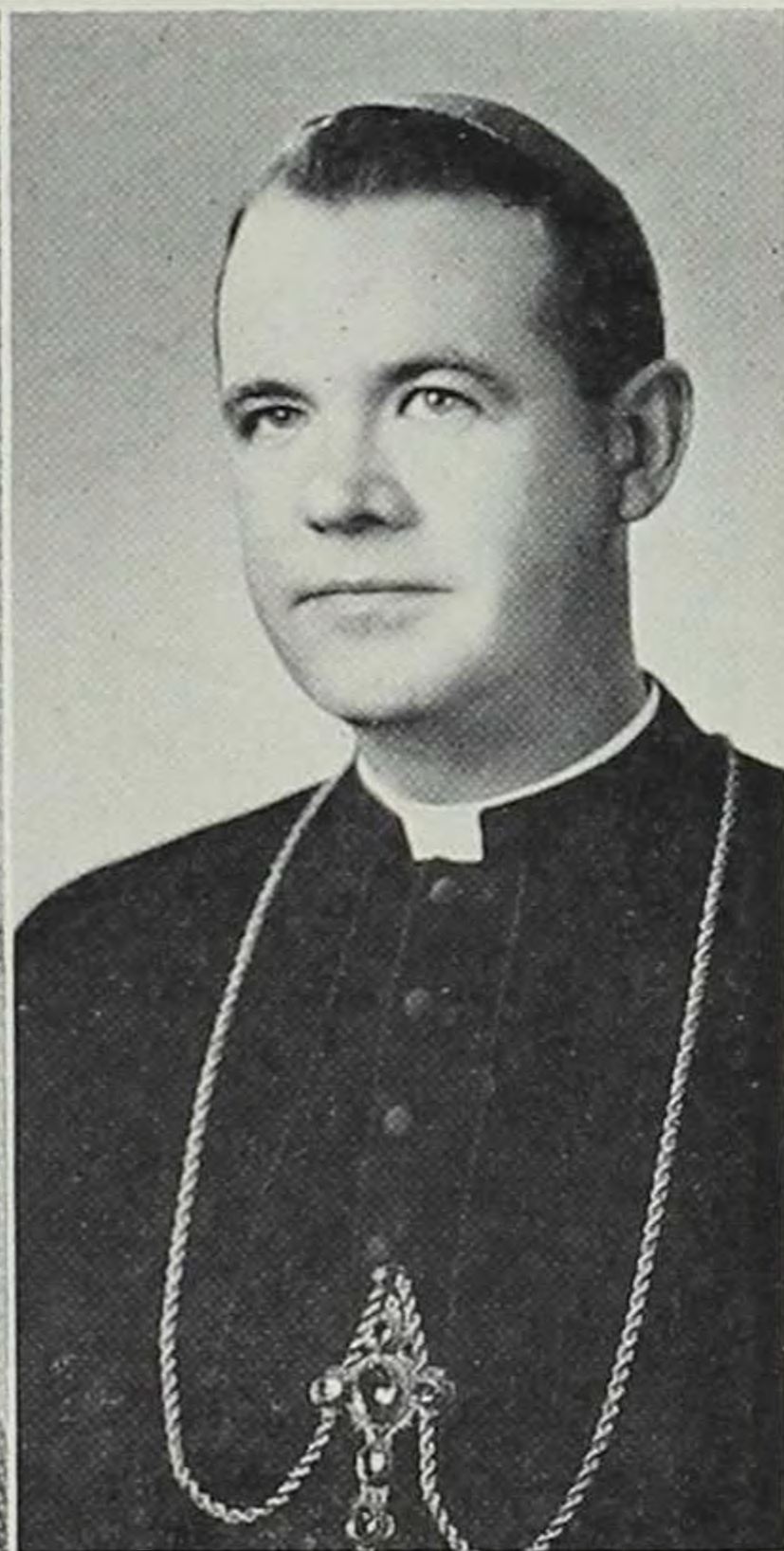
# CATHOLIC HIGHER CLERGY IN IOWA TODAY



Archbishop Leo Binz  
Dubuque Coadjutor  
1951-



Archbishop Henry P.  
Rohlman  
See of Dubuque  
1946-



Bishop Loras T. Lane  
Auxiliary Bishop, Dubuque  
1951-



Bishop Ralph L. Hayes  
Davenport  
1944-



Bishop Joseph M. Mueller  
Sioux City  
1948-



Bishop Edward T. Daly  
Des Moines  
1948-



SOME OUTSTANDING IOWA CATHOLIC LAYMEN



Martin J. Wade  
Iowa City  
Federal Judge  
Southern Iowa District



R. Louis Murphy  
Dubuque  
U. S. Senator  
1933-1936



William F. Riley  
Des Moines  
Federal Judge  
Southern Iowa District



matters were temporarily halted, and finally, after mature deliberation, a friendly decision was reached through compromise by the two institutions, each agreeing to avoid any title in which "Dubuque" and "College" were in juxtaposition. The Dubuque German College dropped the word "College" and went under the appellation of the University of Dubuque. The diocesan institution, wishing to retain its status as a college, chose the name of Columbia College, which was later changed to the name it has since been known by, the name of its illustrious founder, Loras College.

Archbishop Francis J. L. Beckman, formerly bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, succeeded to the see of Dubuque in 1930 following the death of James Keane the previous year. It was under his initiative that the archdiocese from July, 1937, to July, 1938, celebrated with various functions, civic, ecclesiastical, and social, the hundredth birthday of its organization by Rome. Among the many church dignitaries present at the functions may be mentioned the apostolic delegate to the United States, Archbishop Amleto Cicognani; and among the statesmen who spoke at the centennial celebrations were the United States Secretary of Agriculture, later Vice President, Henry A. Wallace, United States Senator Clyde L. Herring, and Governor Nelson G. Kraschel of Iowa.

Archbishop Beckman drew the national spotlight before World War II because of his partici-



pation in America First, a noninterventionist movement, but, once war was declared, he became exceedingly active in its successful prosecution. He sent as chaplains into the armed forces more than forty of his diocesan priests, a higher percentage than from any other diocese in the United States. Resigning at the end of 1946 because of age and ill health, Archbishop Beckman died less than two years later.

His archiepiscopal successor was the Most Rev. Henry P. Rohlman, who had been his coadjutor for two years and who previously for seventeen years had been bishop of Davenport. Besides the establishment of new parishes and the enlargement of Loras College, one of the outstanding achievements of Archbishop Rohlman has been the erection of a large and magnificent orphans' home near Dubuque. In January of 1951 Archbishop Leo Binz, previously bishop of Winona, Minnesota, arrived in the diocese to assume the office of coadjutor to the archbishop of Dubuque. In 1946 Edward A. Fitzgerald had been appointed auxiliary bishop of Dubuque and served in this capacity until he became bishop of Winona in 1950. In 1951 another auxiliary bishop, Loras T. Lane, was consecrated.

### *The Diocese of Davenport*

Due to the tide of Catholic immigration, it was decided in Rome to divide the state of Iowa into



two dioceses, and on May 8, 1881, the southern half of the state, embracing the four southern tiers of counties, was erected into the episcopal see of Davenport. At this time the new diocese contained seventy priests and a Catholic population estimated at 45,000. John McMullen served as its first bishop for only two years, 1881 to 1883. Dedicated to the cause of higher Catholic education, he firmly founded St. Ambrose College at Davenport before he died.

His successor was the first native-born American to serve as a bishop in Iowa and was the only American-born bishop until the year 1911. Henry Cosgrove, an alumnus of Loras College at Dubuque, for twenty-two years guided the religious destinies of his diocese with skillful zeal, the longest episcopal reign in Davenport up to the present time. At his death in 1906 he was followed by Bishop James Davis who for two years previously had acted as coadjutor bishop. It was during Bishop Davis' regime that — in 1911 — the western half of southern Iowa was severed from the Davenport jurisdiction and erected into the new diocese of Des Moines. Shortly before Bishop Davis' death, which occurred in December of 1926, he had been given as his auxiliary bishop, Edward D. Howard, formerly president of Loras College at Dubuque, and today presiding as the archbishop of Portland, Oregon.

In 1927 Henry P. Rohlman was consecrated as



the fourth bishop of Davenport. When, after an active episcopal career of seventeen years, he was appointed coadjutor-archbishop of Dubuque in 1944, he was succeeded by the present incumbent, Bishop Ralph L. Hayes. Bishop Hayes had served previously as rector of the North American College in Rome and as bishop of Helena, Montana.

It should be noted that under all these bishops the diocesan college, St. Ambrose, grew slowly but steadily into one of the foremost Catholic colleges of the nation and is one of the very few which has a department of agriculture in its curriculum. In the Davenport diocese there are also three colleges for women: Marycrest College at Davenport, Mount St. Clare's College at Clinton, and Ottumwa Heights College at Ottumwa, the last two being junior colleges.

### *The Diocese of Sioux City*

This diocese comprises the twenty-four counties of northwestern Iowa that were separated from the archdiocese of Dubuque to form an episcopal see of their own. Although the establishment of this diocese was provided for in the papal bull appointing the former rector of the Catholic University at Washington, D. C., John J. Keane, to the archbishopric of Dubuque on July 24, 1900, the Sioux City diocese was not actually erected until January 15, 1902. Philip J. Garrigan, who had been the first vice-rector of the Catholic Uni-



versity and had occupied that office for fourteen years, became the first bishop. His successor, Bishop Edmund T. Heelan, held spiritual sway for almost thirty years — from 1919 to 1948. Previous to his death he had enjoyed the assistance of two coadjutors: Bishop Thomas L. Noa for one year, who then became bishop of Marquette, Michigan; and Bishop Joseph M. Mueller, also for one year, who now occupies the diocesan seat.

In the course of the half century's vigorous life of the Sioux City diocese, several attempts were made to maintain a Catholic men's college — Trinity College was its name while it existed — but all efforts failed. However, a woman's college, Briar Cliff, with but little more than a score of years to measure its existence, has shown a remarkable progress in numbers of students and in scholastic attainments.

### *The Diocese of Des Moines*

The youngest — it may be added, as far as the number of Catholic inhabitants is concerned — and the smallest of the four dioceses of Iowa is that of Des Moines. This diocese, established in August of 1911, comprises roughly the southwest quarter of the state of Iowa, an area of about 12,500 square miles. Its first bishop was the New England scholar, Austin Dowling, appointed in January of 1912. Exactly seven years later he was



promoted to the archbishopric of St. Paul. His successors were Bishop Thomas Drumm who died in 1933, and Bishop Gerald T. Bergan, who in 1948 was elevated to the archiepiscopal dignity of the Omaha see. The present "ordinary" of Des Moines, as the presiding prelate of a diocese is referred to ecclesiastically, is Bishop Edward T. Daly, of the Order of Preachers, namely, a Dominican. Since the days of Samuel Charles Mazuchelli, missionary and pioneer church builder, this is the first time a son of St. Dominic is playing an influential part in the church activities of the state, and it is also the first time in history, with the sole and singular exception of the Trappist monk, Clement Smyth, chosen bishop of Dubuque almost a century ago, that a member of a religious order was appointed to the episcopal honors in any of the four dioceses of Iowa.

M. M. HOFFMAN



## Catholic Institutions

The grade school system under Catholic parish auspices has flourished fairly well in all four Iowa dioceses except in certain rural districts. On the high school level, due to the greater expenses in competing with the well equipped and ably staffed and frequently consolidated public high schools, the average individual parish which strives to maintain its own parochial high school has enjoyed a more limited amount of success. Hence, a move toward centralization of these secondary schools is beginning to manifest itself. The best example of the centralized high school is the large and progressive Heelan High School of Sioux City. In recent years central high schools have been organized in Ottumwa, Burlington, Muscatine, Le Mars, Cresco, Carroll, and a few other cities. Dubuque, Davenport, and Des Moines have centralized academies for boys, while in a number of places girls are taught in convent high schools.

Iowa has two Catholic colleges primarily for men: Loras College at Dubuque, and St. Ambrose College at Davenport. There are four smaller mission colleges or seminaries conducted by religious orders of men: at Des Moines in St. Gabriel's Monastery, at Davenport the Viatorian house of



studies, at Milford the La Salette Missionary College, and at Epworth St. Paul's Mission College with not quite a hundred students. These are Iowa's Catholic women's colleges: Clarke at Dubuque, Briar Cliff at Sioux City, Marycrest at Davenport, Mount St. Clare's at Clinton, Ottumwa Heights at Ottumwa, and Mount Mercy at Cedar Rapids. The last three mentioned are junior colleges.

Of charitable and eleemosynary projects the Catholic Church of Iowa has throughout its history been extremely solicitous and today it may take justifiable pride in its record. Besides a score of orphans' homes, homes for the aged, homes for working women, babyfolds, and day nurseries, its list of general hospitals conducted by orders of nursing nuns in this agricultural state is so striking that a statistical summary by dioceses for the year 1953 will prove of interest to both the research student and the general reader:

<i>Archdiocese of Dubuque</i>		
<i>Location</i>	<i>General Hospitals</i>	<i>Patients During Year</i>
Dubuque	St. Joseph's Mercy	5,901
Dubuque	Xavier	5,745
Cedar Rapids	Mercy	10,106
Anamosa	Mercy	1,494
Cresco	St. Joseph's	1,488
Marshalltown	Mercy	2,814
Mason City	St. Joseph's	7,561
New Hampton	St. Joseph's	4,800
Oelwein	Mercy	1,767



## CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS

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<i>Location</i>	<i>General Hospitals</i>	<i>Patients During Year</i>
Waterloo	St. Francis	5,485
Waverly	St. Joseph's	1,105
<i>Diocese of Davenport</i>		
Davenport	Mercy	11,578
Burlington	St. Francis	2,500
Burlington	Mercy	4,646
Centerville	St. Joseph's	5,283
Clinton	St. Joseph's	3,141
Ft. Madison	Sacred Heart	5,311
Grinnell	St. Francis	2,474
Iowa City	Mercy	6,474
Keokuk	St. Joseph's	4,300
Ottumwa	St. Joseph's	6,503
<i>Diocese of Sioux City</i>		
Sioux City	St. Joseph's	32,491
Sioux City	St. Vincent's	13,378
Algona	St. Ann	1,399
Carroll	St. Anthony	9,175
Estherville	Holy Family	3,944
Fort Dodge	St. Joseph's	5,000
Le Mars	Sacred Heart	2,410
<i>Diocese of Des Moines</i>		
Des Moines	Mercy	10,835
Corning	Holy Rosary	956
Council Bluffs	Mercy	6,713
Council Bluffs	St. Bernard's	874

In connection with these hospitals, orphanages, and other eleemosynary institutions, each diocese maintains its Bureau of Catholic Charities that directs and guides the general activities. In many parishes, the Bureau is assisted by the St. Vincent



de Paul Societies and by the Legion of Mary. Citizens of all faiths have benefited from these services, which have been rendered on a nonsectarian basis.

M. M. HOFFMAN



## Iowa Catholicism Today

The Roman Catholic population of Iowa, according to the *Official Catholic Directory* of 1953, is 366,037 or about 14 per cent of the state's inhabitants. Just what is the impact of the faith of this Church's members on the course of public life in Iowa? In the political field, measured by elections, it has been slight. Iowa's first two United States Senators, Augustus Caesar Dodge and George Wallace Jones, became Catholics after retiring from the Senate. Richard Louis Murphy was the only Catholic to be elected by popular vote to that body, and a tragic automobile accident cut down his senatorial term (1933-1936) to a little over three years. Of the members of the federal judiciary there have been a few distinguished men like Judge Martin J. Wade of Iowa City, and, today, Judge William F. Riley of Des Moines. There have been no governors, few judges of the district or state supreme courts, and pitifully few members of the General Assembly through the years. A partial explanation is, of course, the fact that Iowa is and has been a strong Republican state, and the Irish Catholics in particular have been wedded by a peculiar tradition to the Democratic party. Few as they have been in the ranks



of legislators, Catholics have, however, been numerically strong in the ranks of the army, navy, and marines, and even in the nurses' corps — and this by voluntary enlistment, as the figures will show, as well as by selective service. In agriculture, labor, business, industry, and the professions, Iowa's Catholic population has abundantly contributed to the upbuilding of the state and the development of the nation.

A more detailed history would include reference to confraternities, sodalities, organizations, and clubs, either in the parishes or as coordinated and regulated on a diocesan basis. Suffice it to say here, that every parish in Iowa has its distinctly religious societies to induce and encourage young and old to live and practice the more devout Catholic life. Those distinctly for the male members are integrated usually in the all-embracing Holy Name Society. For the women and girls of the Catholic faith in Iowa the all-inclusive society is the four diocesan branches of the National Council of Catholic Women, which includes, besides the various parish Sodalitys of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Rosary Societies, several state-wide organizations.

In addition to the above, Iowa Catholics have evinced an interest in the fraternal orders open to them since 1891, when the Catholic Order of Foresters chartered Sherman Court No. 191 at Clinton. The Knights of Columbus started its first



Iowa Council at Dubuque in 1900. Four years later the Catholic Daughters of America organized its first Iowa Court at Carroll. In 1921 the National Circle Daughters of Isabella granted the first Iowa charter to the Lady of Lourdes Circle at Davenport. By 1953, the membership of these organizations in Iowa had reached:

Knights of Columbus .....	21,464
Catholic Daughters of America.....	12,000
Catholic Order of Foresters.....	10,414
Daughters of Isabella.....	3,015

The largest Knights of Columbus chapter is located at Dubuque, with 1,042 members. Dubuque also has the largest Order of Foresters Subordinate Court, with 573 members in Marquette Court No. 811. The Davenport chapter of the Daughters of Isabella has 497, making it the largest in Iowa.

Several Iowans have held national offices with these orders. Mrs. Mary Phelan of Fort Madison is a past National Chancellor of the Daughters of Isabella, and Mrs. Marie Shadwell of Davenport was chosen as the 1952-1953 National Chancellor at the 1952 Toronto convention. From 1928 to 1933 the late William H. Meuser of Dubuque was High Treasurer of the Order of Foresters. George C. Iekel of Independence is now a national High Court Trustee with the same order.

Not necessarily for benevolent but certainly for



welfare purposes there is the Iowa branch of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, founded in 1923 by Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara of Kansas City, Missouri. In 1939 the Conference issued an important *Manifesto on Rural Life*, "a concise statement on agricultural and rural problems from the viewpoint of eminent leaders in the field of Catholic rural thought." There for the first time were stated principles and policies with respect to Catholic rural life affecting such vital questions as farm ownership, land tenancy, rural church expansion, rural health, farm labor, cooperatives, taxation, and credit. As far as Iowa Catholics are concerned, therefore, the Rural Life Conference is of primary importance. The national secretary and one of the moving spirits of this great rural organization is Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti of Des Moines. For his tireless labors in this field not only local prominence but international fame has come to him. His book (with Rev. John C. Rawe, S. J.), *Rural Roads to Security*, is a pioneer work in the area of rural sociology. In a paper on "The Catholic and the American Solution of the Farm Labor Problem," Monsignor Ligutti stated:

There should be reestablished the American tradition which is thoroughly Catholic, viz., a partnership in a modified form between the operator and the laborer. It might take a different form than dividends and profit-sharing but it would be more valuable to the worker. A cow, some chickens, some pigs, a good garden spot for the farm help, and the laborer could eventually step up to tenancy and



proprietorship. Such arrangements have helped in the past; they have helped the community; they have social advantages. That which helps one family helps the whole world and helps the very ones who do the helping. We never lose or suffer by doing good to others.

A notable feature of the Catholic Church's guidance program for young men and young women has been the erection and maintenance of Newman Clubs and Catholic Student Centers at the State University of Iowa in Iowa City, at Iowa State College in Ames, and at Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls. More and more this work with college students becomes significant as the world demands capable leadership grounded in Christian principles of living.

All four dioceses in Iowa have their weekly newspaper organs. Dubuque and Davenport have well-edited weeklies of their own, the *Witness* and the *Catholic Messenger*, respectively, while Sioux City and Des Moines join their local news columns with national Catholic weeklies. At one time Dubuque had the only Catholic daily newspaper in English in the entire United States — the *Catholic Daily Tribune*, published from 1920 to 1941.

The Church's vitality is not measured by its hospitals, its schools, and its church buildings, nor merely by the size of its membership. The Christian doctrine heard in the early catacombs is taught unchanged from the pulpits today, and the

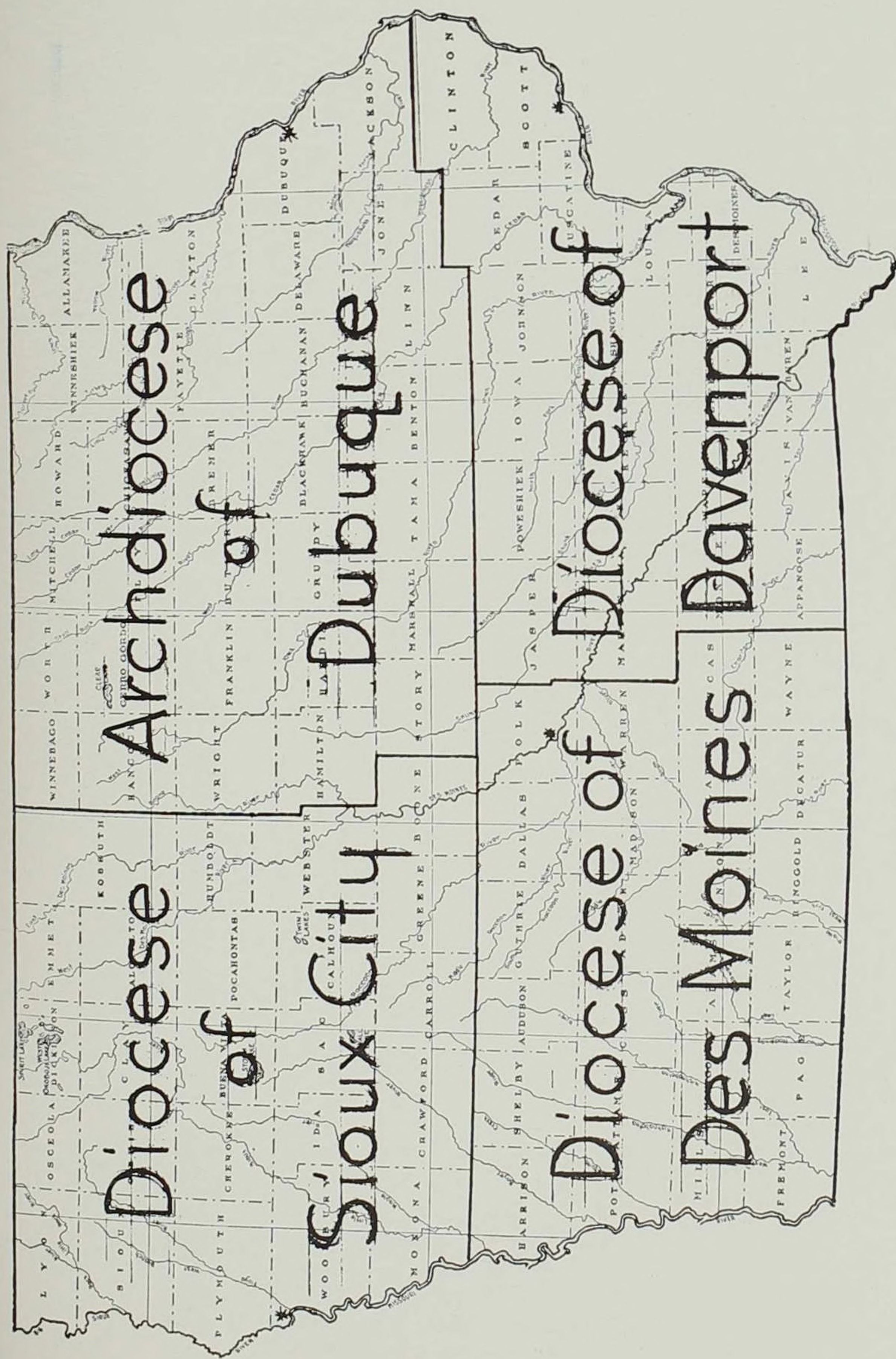


filial faith of Catholic Iowans in the divine Christ is certainly as firm in 1953 as ever it was of yore among their ancestors.

An honest criterion of their contemporary zeal is the erection of the new Mount St. Bernard's Seminary at Dubuque. Iowa candidates for the priesthood had hitherto been sent to the theological seminaries of other states, of Canada, of Louvain and Innsbruck and Rome in Europe. Under the chairmanship of the archbishop of Dubuque and with the wholehearted cooperation of the bishops and people of the four dioceses of Iowa, the goal of \$2,500,000 for the building of this needed institution has been oversubscribed, and from now on Iowa's priestly vocations can be trained, nurtured, and educated in their own provincial seminary. Travelers returning to Iowa from the Holy Year pilgrimages have well stated: "The Church on the banks of the Mississippi is as strong as that on the banks of the St. Lawrence and as zealous as that on the banks of the Tiber!"

M. M. HOFFMAN





The Dioceses of Iowa



